

THE ORTHODOX FAITH

volume iii

bible and church his- tory

AN ELEMENTARY HANDBOOK
ON THE ORTHODOX CHURCH

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by Father Thomas Hopko

Illustrated by John Matusiak

AN ELEMENTARY HANDBOOK
ON THE ORTHODOX CHURCH

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The Series *THE ORTHODOX FAITH* is intended to provide basic, comprehensive information on the faith and life of the Orthodox Church for the average reader. It consists of five handbooks.

Volume I on *DOCTRINE* contains three sections: the sources of Christian doctrine, the main doctrines of the Orthodox Church presented by way of commentary on the Nicene Creed, and an explanation of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity.

Volume II on *WORSHIP* contains five sections: the church building, vestments and symbols; the sacraments; the daily cycle of worship; the church year with its fasts and feasts; and the divine liturgy.

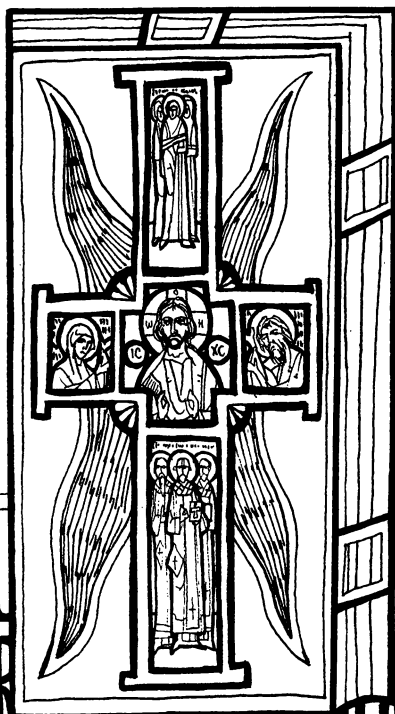
Volume III on *BIBLE AND CHURCH HISTORY* contains one section on the contents and interpretation of the Bible, and one section on the history of the Church, emphasizing the main theological, liturgical and spiritual developments of each century.

Volume IV on *SPIRITUALITY* deals with the main themes of Christian Life: prayer, fasting, repentance, the virtues, witness in the world and communion with God.

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THE BIBLE



Bible

The Bible is the book of sacred writings of God's People of the Old and New Testaments.

The People of God of the Old Testament were the **Jews**, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, whose name was changed by God to **Israel**. (Genesis 32:28) These people are also called the **Hebrews**. They remain forever as God's chosen people for from them "**according to the flesh**" Christ, the Son of God, was born. (Romans 9:5) This Son of God is Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah-King of Israel and the Savior of the world. (See Matthew 1-2, Luke 1-2, Romans 8:3, Galatians 4:4, Hebrews 1-5). The Old Testamental writings of the People of Israel remain forever as the Word of God for all who believe in God and wish to know His divine Truth and to do His divine Will.

The People of God of the New Testament are the **Christians**, those who believe in Jesus as "the Christ, the Son of the Living God" and who belong to the Church which He has founded upon faith in Himself. (See Matthew 16:13-20) The People of God of the New Testament also have their holy writings which bear witness to Christ and which are affirmed to be the Word of God.

Thus, the Bible as a book, or a collection of many books, has two main parts. It has the **Old Testament** writings which prepare the world for the coming of Christ, and, it has the **New Testament** writings which testify to the fact that Christ has come and has saved the world.

Word of God

The Bible is called the written Word of God. This does not mean that the Bible fell from heaven ready made. Neither does this mean that God dictated the Bible word for word to men who were merely His passive instruments. It means that God has revealed Himself as the true and living God to His People, and that as one aspect of His divine self-revelation God inspired His People to produce **scriptures**, i.e. writings which constitute the true and genuine expressions of His Truth and His Will for His People and for the whole world.

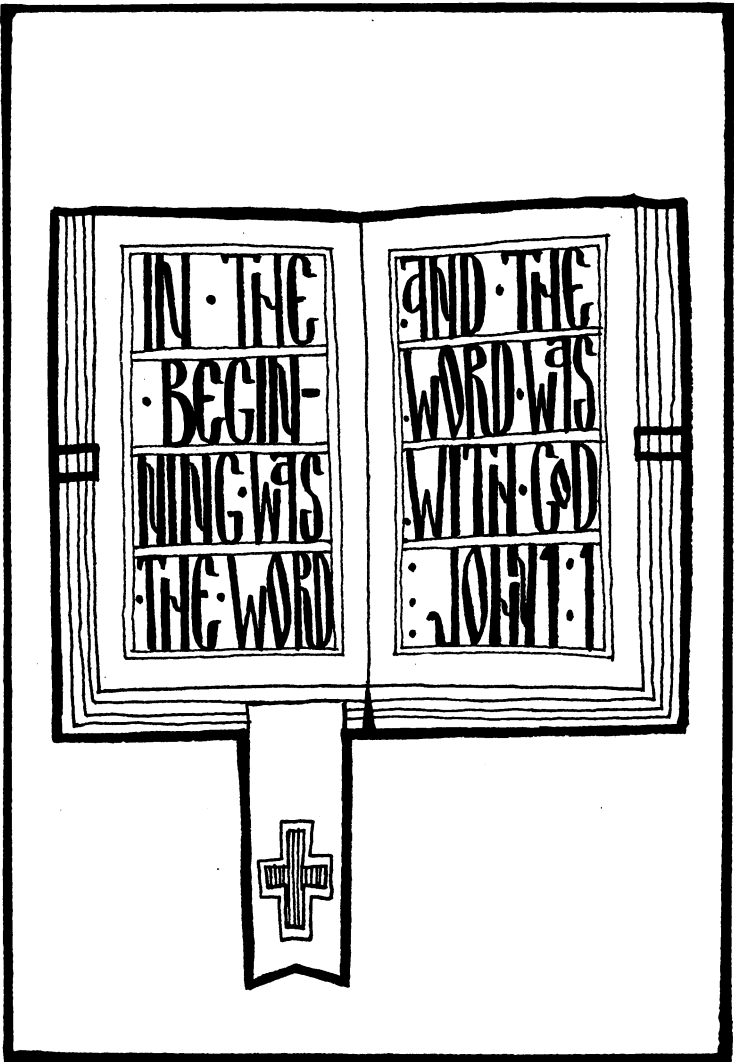
The words of the Bible are human words, for indeed, **all** words are human. They are human words, however, which God Himself inspired to be written in order to remain as the scriptural witness to Himself. As human words, the words of the Bible contain all of the marks of the men who wrote them, and of the time and the culture in which they were written. Nevertheless, in the full integrity of their human condition and form, the words of the Bible are truly the very Word of God.

The Bible is truly the Word of God in human form because its origin is not in man but in God, Who willed and inspired its creation. In this sense, the Bible is not like any other book. In the Bible, in and through the words of men, one finds the self-revelation of God and can come to a true and genuine knowledge of Him and His will and purpose for man and the world. In and through the Bible, human persons can enter into communion with God.

All scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.
(2 Timothy 3:16-17)

It is the faith of the Orthodox Church that the Bible, as the divinely-inspired Word of God in the words of

men, contains no formal errors or inner contradictions concerning the relationship between God and the world. There may be incidental inaccuracies of a non-essential character in the Bible. But the eternal spiritual and doctrinal message of God, presented in the Bible in many different ways, remains perfectly consistent, authentic and true.



Authorship

The Bible has many different human authors. Some books of the Bible do not indicate in any way who wrote them. Other books bear the names of persons to whom authorship is ascribed. In some cases it is perfectly clear that the indicated author is in fact the person who actually wrote the book with his own hands. In other cases it is as clear that the author of the book had another person do the actual writing of his work in the manner of a secretary. In still other cases it is the Tradition of the Church, and not seldom the opinion of biblical scholars, that the indicated author of a given book of the Bible is not the person (or persons) who wrote it, but the person who originally inspired its writing, whose name is then attached to it as its author.

In a number of instances the Tradition of the Church is not clear about the authorship of certain books of the Bible, and in many cases biblical scholars present innumerable theories about authorship which they then debate among themselves. It is impossible to establish the authorship of any book of the Bible by scholarship, however, since historical and literary studies are relative by nature.

Because the Orthodox Church teaches that the entire Bible is inspired by God Who in this sense is its one original author, the Church Tradition considers the identity of the human authors as incidental to the correct interpretation and proper significance of the books of the Bible for the believing community. In no case would the Church admit that the identity of the author determines the authenticity or validity of a book which is viewed as part of the Bible, and under no circumstances would it be admitted that the value or the proper understanding and use of any book of the Bible in the Church depends on the human writer alone.

Interpretation

The Bible is the book of sacred writings for God's People, the Church. It was produced in the Church, by and for the Church, under divine inspiration as an essential part of the total reality of God's covenant relationship with His People. It is the authentic Word of God for those who belong to God's chosen assembly of believers, to the Israel of old and to the Church of Christ today and forever.

The Bible lives in the Church. It comes alive in the Church and has the most profound divine meaning for those who are members of the community which God has established, in which He dwells, and to which, through His Word and His Spirit, He has given Himself for participation, communion and life everlasting. Outside of the total life and experience of the community of faith, which is the Church of Christ, **"the pillar and bulwark of the truth"** (1 Timothy 3:15) no one can truly understand and correctly interpret the Bible.

First of all you must understand that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, because no prophecy came by the impulse of man, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God. (2 Peter 1:20)

Scholars of the Bible can help men to understand its divine contents and meaning. Through their archeological, historical and literary studies they can offer much light to the words of the scriptures. But by themselves and by their academic work alone, no men can produce the proper interpretation of the Bible. Only Christ, the living and personal Word of God, Who comes from the Father and lives in His Church through the Holy Spirit, can make God known and can give the right understanding of the scriptural Word of God.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full

of grace and truth For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has made Him known. (John 1:1-18)

Jesus Christ, the Word of God in human flesh, alone makes God known. And Jesus, besides being Himself the living incarnation of God, the living fulfillment of the law and the prophets (Matthew 5:17), is also the One by whom the Bible is rightly interpreted.

And (being risen from the dead) he said to them, "O foolish men and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?"

And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. (Luke 24:25-27)

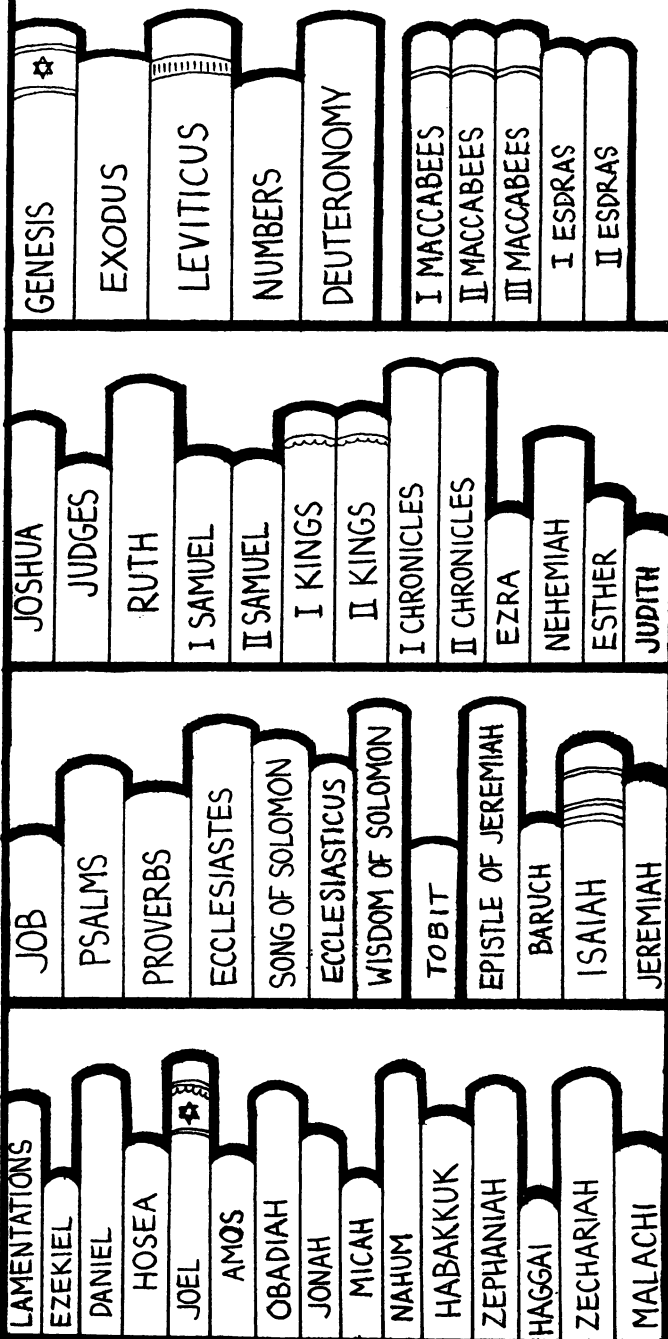
And he said to them, "These are my words which I spoke to you, while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms must be fulfilled." Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures (Luke 24:44-45; also John 5:45-47)

Jesus Christ remains forever in His Church by the Holy Spirit to open men's minds to understand the Bible. (John 14:26, 16:13) Only within Christ's Church, in the community of faith, of grace, and of truth, can men filled with the Holy Spirit understand the meaning and purpose of the Bible's holy words. Thus, speaking about those who do not believe in Jesus as the Messiah, the apostle Paul contends that when they read the Bible a "veil" hides its true meaning from them **"because only through Christ is it taken away."** (2 Corinthians 3:14)

Yes, to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their minds; but when a man turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all (i.e. believers in Christ) with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into his likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. Therefore, . . . we refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled only to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the glory of Christ, who is the likeness of God. (2 Corinthians 3:15 - 4:4)

In the New Testament, Christ not only provides the correct interpretation of the Bible, He also allows the believers themselves to be directly enlightened by the Holy Spirit and to be themselves "the letter from Christ . . . written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of human hearts." (2 Corinthians 3:3) Thus is fulfilled the prediction of the old covenant that in the time of the Messiah "they all shall be taught of God" by direct divine inspiration and instruction. (John 6:45, Isaiah 54:13, Ezekiel 36:26, Jeremiah 31:31, Joel 2:28, Micah 4:2, et. al.) It is only within the living Tradition of the Church under the direct inspiration of Christ's Spirit that the proper interpretation of the Bible can be made. (See Book I, *Doctrine*, Chapter 1.)

The Old Testament



2

**THE
OLD TESTAMENT**

Law

The first part of the Bible is called the **Torah**, which means the **Law**. It is also called the **Pentateuch** which means the **five books**. These books are also called the **Books of Moses**. They include **Genesis**, **Exodus**, **Leviticus**, **Numbers**, and **Deuteronomy**. The events described in these books, from the calling of Abraham to the death of Moses, probably took place sometime in the second millennium before Christ. (2000-1200 B.C.)

The Book of **Genesis** contains the pre-history of the people of Israel. It begins with the story of the creation of the world, the fall of Adam and Eve and the subsequent, quite sinful, history of the children of Adam. It then tells of God's call and promise of salvation to **Abraham**, and the story of **Isaac** and **Jacob**, whom God named **Israel**, ending with the settlement of the twelve tribes of Israel — the families of the twelve sons of Jacob — in Egypt, during the time of Joseph's favor with the Egyptian Pharaoh. In traditional Church language, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are called the **patriarchs**.

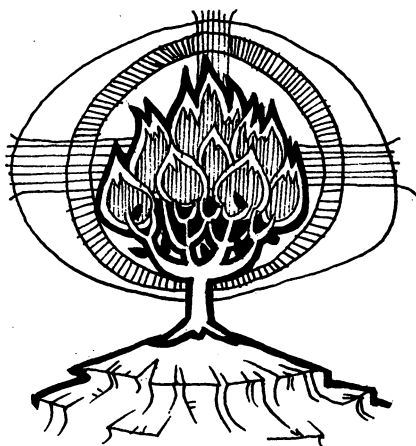
The Book of **Exodus** relates the deliverance of the people of Israel by **Moses** from the slavery in Egypt to which they were subjected after the death of Joseph. It tells of the revelation of God to Moses of His divine name of **Yahweh** — **I AM WHO I AM** (3:14). It gives the account of the passover and the exodus, and the journey of the Israelites, led by God, through the desert. Also, in this book is the narrative of God's gift of the Ten Commandments to Moses on Mount Sinai, and the other laws which God gave to Moses concerning the moral and ritual conduct of His People.

The Book of **Leviticus** is a further book of laws, primarily concerned with the priestly and ritual offices of the people which were conducted by men taken from the tribe of Levi.

The Book of **Numbers** concerns itself primarily with a census of the people. It also contains laws given by God to Moses, and further narratives about the movement of God's People through the wilderness to the land which God promised them.

The Book of **Deuteronomy**, which means the "second law", is again primarily a law code in which is told again the story of the Ten Commandments and the institution of the Mosaic laws of moral and ritual conduct. It ends with Moses' blessing of the people, and his vision of the promised land into which Joshua would lead God's People after his death, the account of which ends the Books of Moses.

Scholars tell us that the Law was not written by the personal hand of Moses and that the books show evidence of being the result of a number of oral and written traditions transmitted among the People of Israel, containing material of later periods. Nevertheless, in the Tradition of Israel and of the Christian Church, the Law remains essentially connected with Moses, the great man of God to whom "the Lord used to speak . . . face to face, as a man speaks to his friend." (Exodus 33:11)



The Ten Commandments

1. I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before me.
2. You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.
3. You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.
4. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work; but the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your manservant, or your maidservant, or your cattle, or the sojourner who is within your gates; for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day; therefore, the LORD blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it.
5. Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land which the LORD your God gives you.
6. You shall not kill.
7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant, or his maidservant, or his ox, or his ass, or anything that is your neighbor's.

Exodus 20:1-17

History

Following the **Law** in the Bible are those books which are called **historical**. They cover the history of Israel from the settlement in the promised land of Canaan to the first centuries before Christ. They include **Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther**, as well as **1 and 2 Esdras, Tobit, Judith** and **1 and 2 Maccabees**, which in the English Bible includes **3 Maccabees**.

In the biblical listing of the Orthodox Church, which is generally that of the **Septuagint**, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, **1 and 2 Samuel** are called **1 and 2 Kings**, and **1 and 2 Kings** are called **3 and 4 Kings**. Also, the so-called **apocryphal** books, listed above after **Esther**, are considered by the Orthodox as genuine parts of the Bible. The Old Testament **apocrypha** is a body of writings considered by the non-Orthodox to be of close association with the Bible, but not actually part of its official canonical contents.

The Book of **Joshua** begins with the People of Israel crossing over the Jordan River and into the promised land led by Joshua, the successor of Moses. It tells of the victories of the Israelites over the local inhabitants, and the settlement of the twelve tribes in the territories appointed to each by Moses.

The Book of **Judges** tells of the period when the Israelites were ruled by the "judges" whom God appointed, the most famous being Ehud, Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah and Samson. During this period, the Israelites were often unfaithful to God and given to evil. They were constantly at war with themselves and their neighbors. The book ends with the line: "**In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his eyes.**" (**Judges 23:25**)

The Book of **Ruth** is a very short story of the Moabite woman whom God blessed to be the wife of Boaz, the great-grandmother of David the King.

The books of **Samuel** and **Kings** begin with the birth of **Samuel**, the prophet whom God chose to anoint **Saul** as the first king of Israel. Until Saul there was no king, for God Himself was to be King for His People. Yet Israel wished to be "like all the nations" and God yielded, with reluctance, to their desires. (Samuel 8) Saul soon became evil and God sent Samuel to anoint David, the shepherd boy, as king in his place. Saul was enraged and made war against David, but David was merciful to him though he could easily have killed him. During this whole time, the Israelites were constantly at war. Saul finally killed himself rather than be taken in battle, and David became the only king. Having subdued all of his enemies, both within Israel and without, David established a glorious kingdom centered in **Jerusalem**, the city which he built. David's son, **Solomon**, favored by God with great wisdom, enlarged his father's kingdom and built the great **temple** for God on Mount Zion. The kingship of David and Solomon lasted from 1000-922 B.C.

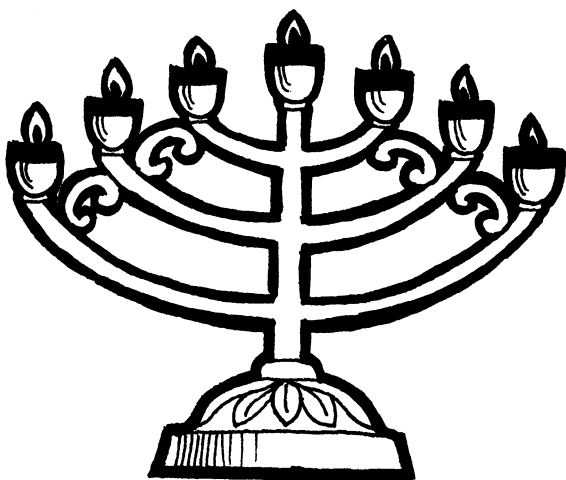
No sooner had Solomon died, than the kingdom collapsed. Two rival states emerged, **Israel** and **Judah**, which were constantly at war with each other and with those around them. This was a time of great decadence and evil that lasted for about three hundred years and ended with the **Babylonian Captivity** (587-539 B.C.). It was the time of **Elijah** and many of the great prophets of God.

Babylon was captured by the Persians led by Cyrus and Darius who restored the Israelites to their homeland. The books of **Ezra** and **Nehemiah** tell of the resettlement of the Jews, and of the rebuilding and the reopening of the temple in Jerusalem.

The two books of **Chronicles** date from this same period and may well have been compiled by Ezra, although scholars consider them as the work of third century authors, perhaps the same who wrote **Ezra**

and **Nehemiah**. The **Chronicles** cover the history of Israel from Adam to the time of Cyrus. They contain numerous geneologies, and show particular interest in David and the Kings as well as in the temple and the priesthood. In the Septuagint Bible the **Chronicles** are called **Paralipomena** which means "that which has been left out," thus indicating their purpose as being to fill in what has been excluded from the earlier historical books of the Bible.

The Book of **Esther**, and those of 1 and 2 **Esdras**, **Tobit**, **Judith**, and 1 and 2 **Maccabees** which, as we have said, are included in the Bible in the Orthodox Church, bring the history of Israel down to New Testament times. They tell of the reorganization of the Jewish community around the temple, the cult and the law as a mere remnant of the great nation, or nations of Israel and Judah, which existed before the time of exile; a struggling remnant constantly in subjugation to external powers. It is mostly the case that the historical books of the Bible were written well after the events described in them actually took place.



Wisdom

The books of the Bible which are commonly called the **Wisdom** books include **Job**, **Psalms**, **Proverbs**, **Ecclesiastes** and the **Song of Solomon**, as well as the **Wisdom of Jesus, Son of Sirach** also called **Ecclesiasticus**, and the **Wisdom of Solomon** from the so-called apocrypha.

The Book of **Job**, usually dated sometime at the period of exile, is the story of righteous suffering in which the sufferer pleads his cause before God only to “**repent in dust and ashes**” (42:6) upon seeing the Lord for himself and being confronted by Him with His own defense of His unspeakable and unfathomable majesty. Selections from this book are read on the first days of Holy Week in the Orthodox Church because they deal with the most profound problem facing believers, the problem of suffering, which is brought to its ultimate completion in Christ who is not merely the most perfect of “suffering innocents,” but indeed the Suffering God in human flesh.

The Book of **Proverbs**, called the “proverbs of Solomon,” undoubtedly comes from Solomon’s time, although scholars place some of the proverbs at a much later date and tell us that the book was put in its present form only after the Babylonian exile. The proverbs are short sayings concerning the proper conduct of wise and righteous persons. They are read in their entirety at the week-day Vesper services of the Church during Great Lent. Selections from the **Proverbs** are also read at the vigils of a number of feasts of the Church since for Christians the **Wisdom of God** is personified and embodied in Christ.

Ecclesiastes is a book of common-sense meditations on the vanity of life in this world and the wisdom of fearing God and keeping His commandments which is “**the whole duty of man**” (11:3). It is traditionally ascribed to Solomon, the Preacher. Scholars place the book in the third century before Christ, however, and

find in its message a hellenistic spirit taken over by the Jews in diaspora among the gentile nations.

The same hellenistic spirit and influences of Greek philosophy, but to a much greater degree, are found in both the **Wisdom of Jesus, Son of Sirach** and the **Wisdom of Solomon** which come from the same period, the very eve of New Testament times. Of the three books just mentioned, only the **Wisdom of Solomon**, which is considered to be the last of them written, is read liturgically in the Orthodox Church.

The **Song of Solomon**, also called the **Song of Songs** or **Canticle of Canticles**, is considered by scholars as a Canaanite wedding hymn of uncertain date. In Orthodox Church Tradition it is interpreted as a mystical love story between man's soul and God. Christian saints of East and West, such as Gregory of Nyssa and Bernard of Clairvaux, have given such a meaning to the book which is in line with the biblical tradition of viewing the interrelationship of God and His People as that of conjugal love. (See Hosea, Jeremiah 2-3, Ephesians 5, Revelation 21-22). This book is never read in the liturgical services of the Orthodox Church, although certain lines from it are traditionally sung in the Russian Orthodox Church when the bride approaches her bridegroom in the church before the celebration of their marriage.

Although not technically a "wisdom" book, mention may be made at this point of **The Prayer of Manasseh** from the so-called apocrypha. This penitential prayer of the King of Judah, which for the Orthodox is part of the Bible, is included in the **Great Compline** service of the Orthodox Church.

Psalms

The **Psalms** are the divinely-inspired songs of the People of Israel. They are traditionally called the “psalms of David,” although many of them most certainly come from other authors of much later times. The enumeration and the wording of the psalms differ in various scriptural traditions. The Orthodox Church follows the **Septuagint** version of the psalter and for this reason the numbers and not seldom the texts of certain psalms are different in Orthodox service books from what they are in the Bibles which are translated from the Hebrew.

In the Orthodox Church, the entire psalter is divided into twenty sections and is chanted each week in those monasteries and churches which perform the entire liturgical office. Various psalms and verses of psalms are used in all liturgical services of the Orthodox Church. (See Book II, on *Worship*)

Virtually all states of man’s soul before God are found expressed in the psalms: praising, thanking, blessing, rejoicing, petitioning, repenting, lamenting, questioning and even complaining. Many of the psalms are centered in the cultic rituals of the Jerusalem temple and the Davidic kingship. Others recount God’s saving actions in Israelite history. Still others carry prophetic utterances about events yet to come, particularly those of the messianic age. Thus, for example, we find Christ quoting Psalm 8 in reference to His triumphal entry into Jerusalem; Psalm 110 in reference to his own mysterious divinity; and Psalm 22, when, hanging upon the cross, He cries out with the words of the psalm in which is described His crucifixion and His ultimate salvation of the world. (See Matthew 21:16, 22:44, 27:46)

In the Orthodox Church all of the psalms are understood as having their deepest and most genuine spiritual meaning in terms of Christ and His mission of eternal salvation. Thus, for example, the psalms

which refer to the king are sung in the Church in reference to Christ's exaltation and glorification at the right hand of God. The psalms which refer to Israel's deliverance are sung in reference to Christ's redemption of the whole world. The psalms calling for victory over the enemies in battle refer to the only real Enemy, the devil, and all of his wicked works which Christ has come to destroy. Babylon thus signifies the realm of Satan, and Jerusalem, the eternal Kingdom of God. The psalms which lament the innocent suffering of the righteous are sung as the plea of the Lord Himself and all those with Him who are the "poor and needy" who will rise up to rule the earth on the day of God's terrible judgment. Thus, the psalter remains forever as the divinely-inspired song book of prayer and worship for all of God's People, and most especially for those who belong to the Messiah whose words the psalms are in their deepest and most divine significance.

LITURGICAL DIVISION OF THE PSALTER (Kathisma)

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Psalms 1 - 8 | 11. Psalms 78 - 85 |
| 2. Psalms 9 - 17 | 12. Psalms 86 - 91 |
| 3. Psalms 18 - 24 | 13. Psalms 92 - 101 |
| 4. Psalms 25 - 32 | 14. Psalms 102 - 105 |
| 5. Psalms 33 - 37 | 15. Psalms 106 - 109 |
| 6. Psalms 38 - 46 | 16. Psalms 110 - 118 |
| 7. Psalms 47 - 55 | 17. Psalm 119 |
| 8. Psalms 56 - 64 | 18. Psalms 120 - 134 |
| 9. Psalms 65 - 70 | 19. Psalms 135 - 143 |
| 10. Psalms 71 - 77 | 20. Psalms 144 - 150 |

Prophets

There are sixteen books in the Bible called by the names of the prophets although not necessarily written by their hands. A **prophet** is one who speaks by the direct inspiration of God; only secondarily does the word mean one who foretells the future. Four of the prophetic books are those of the so-called **major prophets**: **Isaiah**, **Jeremiah**, **Ezekiel** and **Daniel**.

Most scholars believe that the book of **Isaiah** is the work of more than one author. It covers the period from the middle of the eighth century before Christ to the time of the Babylonian exile. It tells of the impending doom upon the people of God for their wickedness and infidelity to the Lord. And it foretells the mercy of God upon His People, as well as the gentiles, in the time of His redemption in the messianic age. The famous vision of the prophet in chapter six is included in the eucharistic prayers of the Orthodox Church. Of central importance in **Isaiah** are the prophecies in the first part of the book, especially chapters six to twelve, concerning the coming of the Messiah-King; and the prophecies at the end of the book, about the salvation of all creation in the suffering servant of the Lord. The entire book of **Isaiah** is read in the Church during Great Lent, and many selections are read at the vigils of the great feasts of the Church. In the New Testament scriptures there are innumerable quotations of the prophecy of **Isaiah** made in reference to John the Baptist, and most especially to Christ Himself. (See Book I on *Doctrine*, and Book II on *Worship*)

The book of **Jeremiah** covers the period of the seventh century before Christ and, like **Isaiah**, prophesies the Lord's wrath upon His sinful people. **Jeremiah**, a most reluctant prophet, suffered greatly at the hands of the people and was constantly persecuted for his proclamation of the Word of the Lord. The book is referred to many times in the New Testament. The messianic

prophecies of salvation in **Jeremiah** are often read in the festal services of the Church (e.g. 31:31 ff.). The books of **Baruch** and the **Letter of Jeremiah** from the apocrypha go together with this prophetic book in the Orthodox version of the Bible.

The book of **Ezekiel**, who was a priest as well as a prophet, is dated at the time of the Babylonian Captivity. Once again, the prophet is directly concerned with God's righteous anger over the sins of His People, making specific reference to the presence – and the departure – of the Lord's glory in the Jerusalem Temple. Ezekiel, however, like all of the prophets, is not without hope in the mercy of God. The moving passage about God's resurrection of the "dry bones" of dead Israel through the breathing in of His Holy Spirit is read over the tomb of Christ at the Great Saturday service of the Orthodox Church. (Chapter 37)

The prophecy of **Daniel**, read in the Church at the vigil of Easter, is concerned with the faithfulness of the Jews to their God in the time of forced apostasy. Scholars consider this book among the latest written in the Old Testament, much after the time of the Babylonian captivity in which the story is placed. Central among the book's messages is the redemption of Israel in the victorious coming of the heavenly **Son of Man**, who, in the New Testament, is identified with Christ. It is the apocalyptic character of the book – **apocalyptic** meaning that which refers to the final **revelation** of God and His ultimate judgment over all creation – which accounts for the placement of **Daniel** at a date close to New Testament times. The **Song of the Three Youths** which goes together with **Daniel** and which is placed by the non-Orthodox among the apocryphal writings, forms a genuine part of the Bible in the Orthodox Church, as do the books of **Susanna** and **Bel and the Dragon**, also part of **Daniel**. The **Song of the Youths** is part of the matinal office in the Orthodox Church.

Among the books of the so-called **minor prophets**, **Amos** and **Hosea** are the earliest, coming, like the first part of **Isaiah**, from the middle of the eighth century before Christ. **Amos** is the great proclaimer of the justice of God against the injustices of His People. **Hosea** tells of the unwavering love of God which will ultimately triumph over the adulterous harlotry of His People who unfaithfully lust after false gods. The book of **Micah** dates from approximately the same period and is very similar in content to **Isaiah**. In **Micah** is found the prophecy of the Savior's birth in Bethlehem. (5:2-4)

Nahum, **Habbakuk**, and **Zephaniah** are dated in the later part of the seventh century before Christ. They imitate **Jeremiah**, prophesying the wrath of a good and just God upon a wicked and unjust people. Like **Jeremiah**, they also foretell the restoration of Israel by the merciful Lord.

Haggai, **Zechariah**, **Malachi** and perhaps **Obadiah**, belong to the period of the return of God's People from exile. **Zechariah** is famous for the oracle of the appearance of the Savior-King, "**triumphant and victorious as he is, humble and riding on an ass . . .**" (9:9) which is referred to Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. **Malachi**, who is ferocious against the sins of the priests, is the last of the prophets before John the Baptist whose coming he foretells, as did the others, to usher in the "**great and terrible day of the Lord**" (3:1, 4:5) when "**the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings.**" (4:2) — a reference made, according to Christians, explicitly to their Lord.

The prophecy of **Joel**, quoted by St. Peter in reference to the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), belongs to the apocalyptic style of **Daniel** as it speaks of the final acts of God in the days of the Lord's "great and terrible" appearance

when He will execute justice and restore the fortunes of His People, delivering "all who call upon the name of the Lord." (2:31-32)

The book of **Jonah** is most likely a prophetic allegory intended to foretell the Lord's salvation of the gentiles in the time of His final messianic presence in the world. It was probably written in post-exilic times. It is read in its entirety in the Church at the Easter vigil of Great Saturday as it was directly referred to by Christ Himself as the sign of His messianic mission in the world. (Matthew 12:38, Luke 11:29)

It must be mentioned at this point, that the variation in names found in English for the prophets, as well as for other persons and places in the scriptures, comes from the different Hebrew and Greek language traditions of the Bible. The Orthodox sources most often tend to follow the Greek. Thus, for example, Elijah becomes Elias, Hosea becomes Osee, Habbakuk becomes Avvakum, Jonah becomes Jonas, etc. Once again we must mention as well that according to Christians, the entire Old Testament finds its deepest meaning and its most perfect fulfillment in the coming of Christ and in the life of His Church.



The New Testament

MATTHEW

MARK

LUKE

JOHN

ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

ROMANS

I CORINTHIANS

II CORINTHIANS

GALATIANS

EPHESIANS

PHILIPPIANS

COLOSSIANS

I THESSALONIANS

II THESSALONIANS

I TIMOTHY

II TIMOTHY

TITUS

PHILEMON

HEBREWS

JAMES

I PETER

II PETER

I JOHN

II JOHN

III JOHN

JUDE

REVELATION

3

**THE
NEW TESTAMENT**

Gospels

The first books of the New Testament scriptures are the four gospels of Saints Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The word **gospel** literally means **good news** or **glad tidings**. The gospels tell of the life and teaching of Jesus, but none of them is a biography in the classical sense of the word. The gospels were not written merely to tell the story of Jesus. They were written by the disciples of Christ, who were filled with the Holy Spirit after the Lord's resurrection, to bear witness to the fact that Jesus of Nazareth is indeed the promised Messiah-Christ of Israel and the Savior of the world.

In the Orthodox Church, it is not the entire Bible, but only the book of the four gospels which is perpetually enthroned upon the altar table in the church building. This is a testimony to the fact that the life of the Church is centered in Christ, the living fulfillment of the law and the prophets, who abides perpetually in the midst of His People, the Church, through the presence of the Holy Spirit.

The gospels of Saints Matthew, Mark and Luke are called the **synoptic** gospels, which means that they "look the same". These three gospels are very similar in content and form and are most probably inter-related textually in some way, exactly how being an ongoing debate among scriptural scholars. They each were written sometime in the beginning of the second half of the first century, and the texts of each of them, as that of St. John, have come down to us in Greek, the language in which they were written, with the possible exception of Matthew which may have been written originally in Aramaic, the language of Jesus.

Each of the synoptic gospels follows basically the same narrative. Each begins with Jesus' baptism by John and His preaching in Galilee. Each centers on the apostles' confession of Jesus as the promised Messiah of God, with the corresponding event of the transfiguration, and the announcement by Christ of

His need to suffer and die and be raised again on the third day. And each concludes with the account of the passion, death, resurrection and ascension of the Lord.

St. Mark

The gospel of **St. Mark** is the shortest, and perhaps the first written, of the gospels, although this is a matter of debate. Its author was not one of the twelve apostles and it is the common view that this gospel presents the “tradition” of St. Peter. The gospel begins immediately with Jesus’ baptism, the call of the apostles, and the preaching of Jesus accompanied by His works of forgiveness and healing. In this gospel, as in all of them, Jesus is revealed from the very beginning by His authoritative words and His miraculous works as the **Holy One of God**, the divine **Son of Man**, Who was crucified and is risen from the dead, thus bringing to the world the Kingdom of God.

St. Matthew

The gospel of **St. Matthew**, who was one of the twelve apostles, is considered by some to be the earliest written gospel. There is also the opinion that it was originally written in Aramaic and not in the Greek text which has remained in the Church. It is a commonly-held view that the gospel of St. Matthew was written for the Jewish Christians to show from the scriptures of the Old Testament, that Jesus, the son of David, the son of Abraham, is truly the Christ, the bearer of God’s Kingdom to men.

The gospel of St. Matthew abounds with references to the Old Testament. It begins with the genealogy of Jesus from Abraham and the story of Christ’s birth from the Virgin in Bethlehem. Then recounting the baptism of Jesus and the temptations in the wilderness, it proceeds to the call of the disciples and the preaching and works of Christ.

The gospel of St. Matthew contains the longest and most detailed record of Christ's teachings in the so-called **Sermon on the Mount**. (5-7) Generally, in the Orthodox Church, it is the text of the gospel of St. Matthew which is used most consistently in liturgical worship, e.g., the version of the beatitudes and the Lord's Prayer. Only this gospel contains the commission of the Lord to His apostles after the resurrection, "to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." (28:19)

St. Luke

The gospel of **St. Luke**, who was not one of the twelve apostles but one of the original disciples, a physician known for his association with the apostle Paul, claims to be an "orderly account . . . delivered by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word." (1:1-4) Together with the book of Acts, also written by St. Luke for a certain Theophilus, this gospel forms the most complete "history" of Christ and the early Christian Church that we have.

The gospel of St. Luke, alone among the four canonical gospels, has a complete account of the birth of both Jesus and John the Baptist. Traditionally, the source for these events recorded by St. Luke is considered to be Mary, the mother of Christ. We must mention at this point that in addition to the four gospels called "canonical" in that they alone have been accepted by the Church as genuine witnesses to the true life and teachings of Christ, there exist many other writings from the early Christian era which tell about Jesus, and especially His childhood, which have not been accepted by the Church as authentic and true. These writings are often called **apocryphal** (not to be confused with the so-called **apocrypha** of the Old Testament), or the **pseudoepigrapha** which literally means "false writings."

St. Luke's gospel is noted for the detail of its narrative, and especially for its record of Christ's great concern for the poor and for the sinful. Certain parables warning against the dangers of riches and self-righteousness, and revealing the great mercy of God to sinners, are found only in the gospel of St. Luke, for example, those of the publican and the pharisee, the prodigal son, and Lazarus and the rich man. There is also a very great emphasis in this gospel on the Kingdom of God which Christ has brought to the world and which He gives to those who continue with Him in His sufferings.

The post-resurrection account of the Lord's presence to the two disciples on the road to Emmaeus in which only one of the disciples is named, an account found only in St. Luke's gospel, gives rise to the tradition that the unnamed disciple was Luke himself.

St. John

The gospel of St. John is very different from the synoptic gospels. It is undoubtedly the latest written, being the work of the beloved disciple and apostle of the Lord at the end of his life near the close of the first century. In most Orthodox versions of the Bible, this gospel is printed before the others as it is the one which is first read in the Church's lectionary beginning at the divine liturgy on Easter night.

The gospel of St. John begins with its famous prologue which identifies Jesus of Nazareth with the divine Word of God of the Old Testament, the Word of God Who was "in the beginning with God," Who "is God," the One through Whom "all things were made." (1:1-3) This Word of God "became flesh," and as Jesus, the Son of God, He makes God known to men and grants to all who believe in Him the power of partaking of His own fulness of grace and truth and of becoming themselves "children of God." (1:14ff.)

From the first pages of this gospel, following the prologue, in the account of Jesus' baptism and His calling of the apostles, Jesus is presented as God's only begotten Son, the Messiah and the Lord. Throughout the gospel, He is identified as well, in various ways, with the God of the Old Testament, receiving the divine name of **I AM** together with the **Yahweh** of Moses and the prophets and psalms. (See Book I, *Doctrine*)

The gospel of St. John, following the prologue, may be divided into two main parts. The first part is the so-called book of "signs," the record of a number of Jesus' miracles with detailed "commentary" about their significance in signifying Him as Messiah and Lord. (2-11) Because the "signs" all have a deeply spiritual and sacramental significance for believers in Christ, with almost all of them dealing with water, wine, bread, light, the salvation of the nations, the separation from the synagogue, the forgiveness of sins, the healing of infirmities and the resurrection of the dead, it is sometimes thought that the gospel of St. John was expressly written as a "theological gospel" for those who were newly initiated into the life of the Church through the sacramental mysteries of baptism, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and the eucharist. In any case, because of the contents of the book of "signs," as well as the long discourses of Christ about His relationship to God the Father, the Holy Spirit and the members of His faithful flock, in the latter part of the gospel, the apostle and evangelist John has traditionally been honored in the Church with the title of **The Theologian**.

The latter half of St. John's gospel concerns the passion of Christ and its meaning for the world. (11-21) Here most explicitly, in long discourses coming from the mouth of the Lord Himself, the doctrines of Christ's person and work are most deeply explained. As we have just mentioned, here Christ relates Himself

to God the Father, to the Holy Spirit and to His community of believers in clear and certain terms. He is one with God, Who as Father is greater than He, Whose words He speaks, Whose works He accomplishes and Whose will He performs. And through the Holy Spirit, Who proceeds from the Father to bear witness to Him in the world, He remains abiding forever in those who are His through their faith and co-service of God.

The account of the passion in St. John's gospel differs slightly from that of the synoptic gospels and is considered by many, in this instance, to be a certain clarification or correction. There are also accounts of the resurrection given which are recorded only in this gospel. The final chapter of the book is traditionally considered to be an addition following the first ending of the gospel, to affirm the reinstatement of the apostle Peter to the leadership of the apostolic community after his three denials of the Lord at the time of His passion. It may have been a necessary inclusion to offset a certain lack of confidence in St. Peter by some members of the Church.

In the Tradition of the Orthodox Church, a tradition often expressed in the Church's iconography, the four gospels are considered to be symbolized in the images of the "four living creatures" of the biblical apocalypse, the lion, the ox, the man and the eagle, with the most classical interpretation connecting Matthew with the man, Luke with the ox, Mark with the lion and John with the eagle. (Ezekiel 1:10, Revelation 4:7) The four gospels, taken together, but each with its own unique style and form, remain forever as the scriptural center of the Orthodox Church.

Acts of the Apostles

The book of the **Acts of the Apostles** was written by St. Luke toward the end of the first century, as the second part of his history for Theophilus about Christ and His Church. The book begins with an account of the Lord's ascension and the election of Matthias to take the place of Judas as a member of the twelve apostles. Then follows the record of the events of the day of Pentecost when the promised Holy Spirit came upon the disciples of Christ empowering them to preach the gospel of new life in the resurrected Savior to the people of Jerusalem.

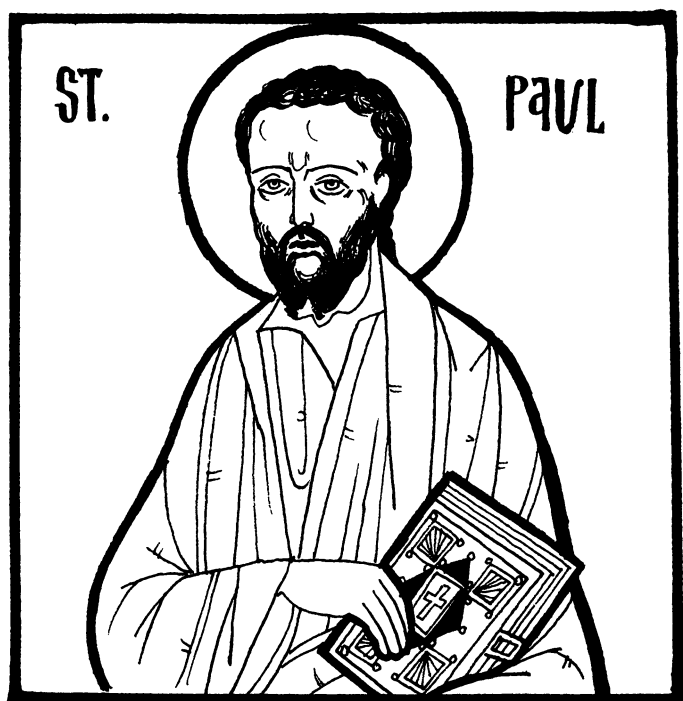
The first chapters of the book tell the story of the first days of the Church in Jerusalem and provide us with a vivid picture of the primitive Christian community being built up through the work of the apostles. It tells of the people being baptized and endowed with the gift of the Holy Spirit through repentance and faith in Christ, and continuing steadfast in their devotion **"to the apostles' doctrine and fellowship (communion), to the breaking of the bread and the prayers."** (2:42)

Following the description of the martyrdom of the deacon Stephen, the first to give his life for Christ, **Acts** tells of the conversion of the persecutor Saul into the zealous apostle Paul, and records the events by which the first gentiles were brought into the Church by the direct action of God. There then follows an account of the first missionary activities of Saints Paul and Barnabas, and the famous fifteenth chapter in which the first council of the Church in Jerusalem is described, the council which established the conditions under which the gentiles could enter the Church relative to the Mosaic law which all of the Jewish Christians were then keeping.

The final half of the book describes the missionary activities of the apostle Paul through Syria and Cilicia, into Macedonia and Greece and back again through

Ephesus to Jerusalem. It then gives the account of Saint Paul's arrest in Jerusalem, and his defense before the authorities there. The book ends with the description of Saint Paul's journey to Rome for trial, closing with the information that **"he lived there two whole years preaching the Kingdom of God and teaching about the Lord quite openly and unhindered"** to those who came to him in his house of arrest. (28:30)

The book of the **Acts of the Apostles** forms the apostolic lectionary of the Church's liturgy during the time from Easter to Pentecost. Selections from it are also read at other feasts of the Church, e.g., St. Stephen's Day. It is also the custom of the Church to read the book of Acts over the tomb of Christ on Good Friday, and over the body of a deceased priest at the wake prior to his burial.



Letters of St. Paul

Fourteen letters, also called **epistles**, which are ascribed to the apostle Paul are included in the holy scriptures of the New Testament Church. We will comment on the letters in the order in which they are normally printed in the English Bible and read in the Church's liturgical year.

Romans

The letter to the Romans was written by St. Paul from Corinth sometime at the end of the fifties of the first century. It is one of the most formal and detailed expositions of the doctrinal teaching of St. Paul that we have. It is not one of the easier parts of the scripture to understand without careful study.

In this letter, the apostle Paul writes about the relationship of the Christian faith to the unbelievers, particularly the unbelieving Jews. The apostle upholds the validity and holiness of the Mosaic law while passionately defending the doctrine that salvation comes only in Christ, by faith and by grace. He discourses powerfully about the meaning of union with Christ through baptism and the gift of the Holy Spirit. He urges great humility on the part of the gentile Christians toward Israel, and calls with great pathos and love for the regrafting of the unbelieving Jews to the genuine community of God which is in Christ Who is Himself from Israel "**according to the flesh**" (9:5) for the sake of its salvation and that of all the world.

The end of the letter is a long exhortation concerning the proper behavior of Christians, finally closing with a long list of personal greetings from the apostle and his co-workers, including one Tertius, the actual writer of the letter, to many members of the Roman Church, urging, once more, steadfastness of faith.

The letter to the Romans is read in the Church's liturgical lectionary during the first weeks following the feast of Pentecost. Selections from it are also read

on various other liturgical occasions, one of which, for example, is the sacramental liturgy of baptism and chrismation. (6:3-11)

First Corinthians

The first Christian community in Corinth was noted neither for its inner peace and harmony, nor for the exemplary moral behavior of its members. The two letters of St. Paul to the Corinthians which we have in the New Testament, written in the mid-fifties of the first century, are filled not only with doctrinal and ethical teachings, the answers to concrete questions and problems, but also with no little scolding and chastisement by the author, as well as numerous defenses of his own apostolic authority. These letters clearly demonstrate the fact that the first Christians were not all saints, and that the early Church experienced no fewer difficulties than the Church does today or at any time in its history in the world.

After a short greeting and word of gratitude to God for the grace given to the Corinthians, the first letter begins with St. Paul's appeal for unity in the Church. There are deep disagreements and dissensions among the members of the community, and the apostle urges all to be fully united in the crucified Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit in Whom there can be no divisions at all. (1-3) He then defends his apostleship generally and his fatherhood of the Corinthian Church in particular, both of which were being attacked by some members of the Church. (4) Next, he deals with the problem of sexual immorality among members of the community and the matter of their going to court before pagan judges. (5-6) After this comes St. Paul's counsel about Christian marriage and his advice concerning the eating of food offered to idols. (7-8) Then once again he defends his apostleship, stressing the fact that he has always supported himself materially and has burdened no one.

The divisions and troubles in the Corinthian community were most concretely expressed at the eucharistic gatherings of the Church. There was general disrespect and abuse of the Body and Blood of Christ, and the practice had developed where each clique was having its own separate meal. These divisions were caused in no small part by the fact that some of the community had certain spiritual gifts, for example, that of praising God in unknown tongues, which they considered as signs of their superiority over others. There also was trouble caused by women in the Church, who were using their new freedom in Christ for disruption and disorder.

In his letter St. Paul urges respect and discernment for the holy eucharist as the central realization of the unity of the Church, coming from Christ Himself. He warns against divisions in the Church because of the various spiritual gifts, urging the absolute unity of the Church as the one body of Christ which has many members and many gifts for the edification of all. He insists on the absolute primacy and superiority of love over every virtue and gift, without which all else is made void and is destroyed. He tempers those who had the gift of praising God in strange tongues, a gift which was obviously presenting a most acute problem, and calls for the exercise of all gifts and most particularly the simple and direct teaching of the Word of God in the Church. He appeals to the women to maintain themselves in dress and behavior proper to Christians. And finally he insists that **“all things should be done decently and in order.”** (10-14)

The first letter to the Corinthians ends with a long discourse about the meaning of the resurrection of the dead in Christ which is the center of the Christian faith and preaching. The apostle closes with an appeal for money for the poor, and promising a visit, he once again insists on the absolute necessity of strength of faith, humble service and most especially, love.

Second Corinthians

The entire second letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians is a detailed enumeration and description of his sufferings and trials in the apostolate of Christ. In this letter, the apostle once again defends himself before the Corinthians, some of whom were reacting very badly to him and to his guidance and instruction in

Saint Paul's Hymn to Love

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never ends; as for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For our knowledge is imperfect and our prophecy is imperfect; but when the perfect comes, the imperfect will pass away. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became a man, I gave up childish ways. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood. So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love. (1 Corinthians 13)

the faith. He defends the “pain” that he is causing these people because of his exhortations and admonitions to them concerning their beliefs and behavior, and he calls them to listen to him and to follow him in his life in Christ.

Of special interest in the second letter, in addition to the detailed record of St. Paul’s activities and all that he had to bear for the gospel of Christ, is the doctrine of the apostle concerning the relationship of Christians with God through Christ and the Holy Spirit in the Church. Worthy of special note also, is the apostolic teaching about the significance of the scriptures for the Christians (3-4) and the teaching about contributions of money for the work of the Church.(9)

The closing line of the second letter to the Corinthians, which, like all epistles, forms part of the Church’s lectionary, is used in the divine liturgies of the Orthodox Church during the eucharistic canon.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God (the Father), and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. (2 Corinthians 13:14)

Galatians

The letter of St. Paul to the Galatians, most likely the southern Galatians (Lystra, Derbe, Iconium), was sent from Antioch in the early fifties. In this most vehement epistle, the apostle Paul expresses his profound anger and distress at the fact that the Galatians, who had received the genuine gospel of Christ from him, had been seduced into practicing “another gospel” which held that man’s salvation requires the ritual observance of the Old Testament law, including the practice of circumcision.

The heart of this letter to the “foolish Galatians” (3:1) is St. Paul’s uncompromising defense of the fact that his gospel is not his but Christ’s, the gospel of salvation not by the law, but by grace and faith in the

crucified Savior Who gives the Holy Spirit to all who believe. The apostle stresses the fact that in Christ and the Spirit there is freedom from slavery to the flesh, slavery to the elemental spirits of the universe, and slavery to the ritual requirements of the law through which no one can be saved. For the true **“Israel of God”** (6:16) in Christ and the Spirit, there is perfect freedom, divine sonship and a new creation. Those **“who are led by the Spirit . . . are not under the law.”** (5:18)

The letter to the Galatians is included in the Church’s liturgical lectionary, with the famous lines from the fourth chapter being the epistle reading of the Orthodox Church at the divine liturgy of Christmas. (4:4-7) This letter also provides the Church with the verse which is sung at the solemn procession of the liturgy of baptism and chrismation, and which also replaces the Thrice-Holy Hymn at the divine liturgies of the great feasts of the Church which were once celebrations of the entrance of the catechumens into the sacramental life of the Church. (See Book II, *Worship*)

For as many as have been baptized into Christ
have put on Christ. (Galatians 3:27)

Ephesians

The letters of St. Paul to the Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians are called the **captivity epistles** since they are held to have been written by the apostle from his house arrest in Rome around 60 A.D. In some early sources, the letter to the Ephesians does not contain the words “who are at Ephesus,” thus leading some to think of the epistle as a general letter meant for all of the churches.

St. Paul’s purpose in the letter to the Ephesians is to share his **“insight into the mystery of Christ”** (3:4) and **“to make all men see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God Who created all**

things . . .” (3:9) In the first part of the letter, the apostle attempts to describe the mystery. He uses many words in long sentences, overflowing with adjectives, in his effort to accomplish his task. Defying a neat outline, the main points of the message are clear.

The plan of God for Christ, before the foundation of the world, is **“to unite all things in Him, things in heaven and things on earth” (1:10)** The plan is accomplished through the crucifixion, resurrection and glorification of Christ at the right hand of God. The fruits of God’s plan are given freely to all men by God’s free gift of grace, to Jews and gentiles alike, who believe in the Lord. They are given in the One Holy Spirit, in the One Church of Christ, **“which is His body, the fulness of Him who fills all in all.” (1:23)** In the Church of Christ, with each part of the body knit together and functioning properly in harmony and unity, man grows up in truth and in love **“to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” (4:12-16)** He gains access to God the Father through Christ in the Spirit thus becoming **“a holy temple of the Lord . . . a dwelling place of God” (2:18-22), “filled with all the fulness of God.” (3:19)**

In the second part of the letter, St. Paul spells out the implications of the **“great mystery . . . Christ and the Church.” (5:32)** He urges sound doctrine and love, a true conversion of life, a complete end to all impurity and immorality and a total commitment to spiritual battle. He addresses the Church as a whole; husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and slaves. He calls all to **“put on the new nature, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.” (4:24)**

The letter to the Ephesians finds its place in the liturgical lectionary of the Church, with the well-known lines from the sixth chapter being the epistle reading at the sacramental celebration of marriage. (5:21-33)

Philippians

As we have mentioned, the letter of St. Paul to the Philippians was written at the time of his confinement in Rome. It is a most intimate letter of the apostle to those whom he sincerely loved in the Lord, those who were his faithful partners in the gospel **“from the first day until now.”** (1:5) In this letter, St. Paul exposes the most personal feelings of his mind and heart as he sees the approaching end of his life. He also praises the Philippian Church as a model Christian community in every way, encouraging and inspiring its beloved members whom he calls his **“joy and crown”** (4:1) with prayers that their **“love may abound more and more with knowledge and all discernment,”** so that they **“may approve what is excellent, and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with all the fruits of righteousness which come through Jesus Christ for the praise and glory of God.”** (1:10-11)

Of special significance in the letter to the Philippians, besides the mention of **“bishops and deacons”** (1:1), which hints at the developing structure of the Church, is St. Paul’s famous passage about the self-emptying (**kenosis**) of Christ which is the epistle reading for the feasts of the Nativity and Dormition of the Theotokos in the Orthodox Church, and which has been so influential for Christian spiritual life, particularly in Russia.

Have this mind among yourselves, which you have in Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking on the form of a servant (slave), and being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name (2:5-9)

Like all Pauline epistles, the letter to Phillipians has its place in the Church’s normal lectionary.

Colossians

It is believed that the letter of St. Paul to the Colossians, written, as we have said, from Rome, was expressly intended to instruct the faithful in Colossae in the true Christian gospel in the face of certain heretical teachings which were threatening the community there. It appears that some form of gnosticism and angel worship had crept into the Colossian Church.

Gnosticism was an early Christian heresy which, in all of its various forms, denied the goodness of material, bodily reality, and therefore, the genuine incarnation, crucifixion and resurrection of Christ in human flesh. It made of the Christian faith a type of dualistic, spiritualistic philosophy which pretended to provide a secret knowledge of the divine by way of intellectual mysticism. **Gnosis**, as a word, means knowledge.

In his letter, St. Paul stresses that he indeed wishes the Colossians to be **“filled with the knowledge of God’s will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding”** (1:9), and that indeed it is true that in Christ **“are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”** (2:3) The real point of the Christian gospel, however, is that in Christ, through whom and for whom all things were created (1:16), **“the whole fulness of deity dwells *bodily*.”** (2:9) It is only through the incarnation of Christ and His death on the cross and His resurrection from the dead, in the most real way, that salvation is given to men. It is given in the Church, through baptism; the Church which is itself Christ’s **“body.”** (1:24, 2:19)

Thus, the apostle insists to the Colossians that Christ is superior to all angels, having **“disarmed the principalities and powers (i.e., the angels). . . . triumphing over them”** on the cross. (2:15) He warns them, therefore **“to see to it that no one makes a prey of you by philosophy and vain deceit, according to human traditions, according to the elemental spirits of the universe and not according to Christ.”** (2:8) He warns as

well that they should **“let no one disqualify you, insisting on self-abasement and worship of angels, taking his stand on visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind. . . .”** (2:18)

The content and style of the letter to the Colossians is very similar to **Ephesians**. Following the doctrinal instructions of the letter, their spiritual implications for the believer are spelled out with moral exhortations for a life lived in conformity to Christ and in total service to Him. Like the other letters of St. Paul, the letter to Colossians is read in its turn in the liturgical services of the Church.

Thessalonians

It is generally agreed that St. Paul's two letters to the Thessalonians are the first of the apostle's epistles, and are also the earliest written documents of the New Testament scriptures. They were most likely sent from Corinth, at the end of the forties, in response to the report brought from Timothy that certain difficulties had arisen in the Thessalonian Church about the second coming of Christ and the resurrection of the dead.

In both of his letters to the Thessalonians, St. Paul repeats the same doctrine. He urges patient steadfastness of faith and continual love and service to the Lord and the brethren in the face of the many persecutions and trials which were confronting the faithful. He affirms that the Lord will come **“like a thief in the night”** (1 Thess. 5:2) when all satanic attacks against the faith have been completed. But in the meantime, the Christians must continue **“to do their work in quietness”** (2 Thess. 3:12) without panic or fear, and without laziness or idleness into which some had fallen because of their belief in the Lord's immediate return.

Concerning the resurrection from the dead, the apostle teaches that as Jesus truly rose, so will all **“those who have fallen asleep.”** (1 Thess. 4:14)

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven and the dead in Christ will rise first; then we who are alive, who are left, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord. (1 Thess. 4:16-17)

This entire passage (1 Thess. 4:16-17) is the epistle reading at the funeral liturgy in the Orthodox Church. Both letters to the Thessalonians are included in the liturgical lectionary during the Church year.

Timothy

The letters of St. Paul to Timothy and Titus are called the **pastoral epistles**. Although some modern scholars consider these letters as documents of the early second century, primarily because of the developed picture of Church structure which they present, Orthodox Church Tradition defends the letters as authentic epistles of St. Paul from his house arrest in Rome in the early sixties of the first century.

The two letters to Timothy are of similar contents, having the same purpose to teach **“how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and bulwark of the truth.”** (1 Timothy 3:15)

In his **first letter to Timothy**, St. Paul urges his **“true child in the faith”** (1:2), who was in Ephesus, to **“wage the good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience.”** (1:18-19) He urges that prayers **“be made for all men”** by the Church (2:1) and that **“good doctrine”** be preserved and propagated, most particularly in times of difficulties and defections from the true faith. (4:6, 6:3) In the letter, the apostle counsels all in proper Christian belief and behavior, giving special advice, both professional and personal, to his co-worker Timothy whom he counsels not to neglect the gift which he received **“when the elders laid their hands”** upon him. (4:14)

The main body of the first letter to Timothy describes in detail the requirements for the pastoral offices of **bishop, deacon and presbyter** (priest or elder), and offers special instructions concerning the widows and slaves. The rules concerning the pastoral ministries have remained in the Orthodox Church, being formally incorporated into its canonical regulations.

Of special note in the first letter to Timothy is St. Paul's confession of sinfulness which has become part of the pre-communion prayers of the Orthodox Church.

The saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am first. (1 Timothy 1:15)

In his second letter to Timothy, St. Paul again urges his "**beloved child**" to "**rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands.**" (1:2,6) He stresses the absolute necessity for "**sound doctrine**" in the Church, calling for a firm struggle against "**godless chatter**" and the "**disputing over words**" (2:14,16) particularly in "**times of stress**" when the gospel is attacked by men of "**corrupt mind and counterfeit faith**" who are merely "**holding the form of religion but denying the power of it.**" (3:1-8) As in his first letter, the apostle specifically mentions the need for the firm adherence to the scriptures. (3:15)

The expression of St. Paul in this letter, that the leaders of the Church must be found "**rightly handling the word of truth**" (2:15), has become the formal liturgical prayer of the Orthodox Church for its bishops.

Titus

St. Paul's letter to Titus in Crete is a shorter version of his two letters to Timothy. The author outlines the moral requirements of the **bishop** in the Church and

urges the pastor always to **“teach what befits sound doctrine.”** (1:9, 2:1) It tells how both the leaders and the faithful members of the Church should behave.

Sections of the letter to Titus about the appearance of **“the grace of God . . . for the salvation of all men . . . by the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit which He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior”** (2:11-3:7) comprise the Church’s epistle reading for the feast of the Epiphany.

Generally speaking, each of the pastoral epistles is included in the Church’s continual epistle lectionary, coming in the Church year just before the beginning of Great Lent.

Philemon

In his letter to Philemon written from his Roman imprisonment, St. Paul appeals to his **“beloved fellow worker”** (1:1) to receive back his runaway slave Onesimus who had become a Christian, **“no longer as a slave, but as a beloved brother . . . both in the flesh and in the Lord.”** (16) He asks Philemon to **“receive him as you would receive me”** (17) and offers to pay whatever debts Onesimus may have towards his master.

Hebrews

Virtually none of the modern scriptural scholars think that St. Paul is the author of the letter to the Hebrews. The question of the exact authorship of this epistle was questioned early in Church Tradition with the general consensus being that the inspiration and doctrine of the letter is certainly St. Paul’s, but that perhaps the actual writer of the letter was one of St. Paul’s disciples. The letter is dated in the second half of the first century and is usually read in the Church as being **“of the holy apostle Paul.”**

The letter to the Hebrews begins with the clear teaching about the divinity of Christ, affirming that God,

Who “in many and various ways . . . spoke of old to our fathers” has “in these last days . . . spoken to us by a Son, Whom He appointed the heir of all things, through Whom He also created the world.” (1:1-2)

He (the Son of God) reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of His nature (or person), upholding the universe by the word of His power. (1:3)

Christ, the divine Son of God, was made man as the “apostle and high priest of our confession” (3:1), “the great shepherd of the sheep” (13:20), “the pioneer and perfecter of our faith” (12:2) whom God sent to “taste of death for everyone.” (2:9)

. . . He Himself . . . partook of the same nature (of human flesh and blood), that through death He might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage . . . (being) made like His brethren in every respect, so that He might become a merciful and faithful highpriest in the service of God, to make expiation for the sins of the people. For since He Himself has suffered and been tempted, He is able to help those who are tempted. (2:14-18)

The main theme of the letter to the Hebrews is to compare the sacrifice of Christ to the sacrifices of the priests of the Old Testament. The Old Testament priests made continual sacrifices of animals for themselves and the sins of the people, entering into the sanctuary of the Jerusalem temple. Christ makes the perfect and eternal sacrifice of Himself upon the cross, once and for all, for the sins of the people and not for Himself, entering into the heavenly sanctuary, not made by hands, “to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.” (9:24) This is the perfect and all fulfilling

sacrifice of the one perfect high priest of God Who was prefigured in the mysterious person of Melchizedek, in the Old Testament, as well as in the ritual priesthood of the Levites under the old law which was **“but a shadow of the good things to come”** and not yet the **“true form of these realities.”** (10:1, See Genesis 14, Exodus 29, Leviticus 16, Psalm 110)

Through the perfect sacrifice of Christ, the believers receive forgiveness of sins and are **“made perfect”** (11:40), being led and disciplined by God Himself Who gives His Holy Spirit that through their sufferings in imitation of Christ, His people **“may share in His holiness.”** (12:10) This is effected, once again, not by the ritual works of the law which **“made nothing perfect”** (7:19), but by faith in God, without which **“it is impossible to please Him.”** (11:6)

The letter to the Hebrews, which is read in the Orthodox Church at the divine liturgies during Great Lent, ends with the author’s appeal to all to **“be grateful for receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken”** and to **“offer to God acceptable worship with reverence and awe; for our God is a consuming fire.”** (12:28) It calls as well for love, faith, purity, generosity, strength, obedience and joy among all who believe in **“Jesus Christ (Who) is the same yesterday and today and for ever.”** (13:8)

Letter of St. James

According to Church Tradition, the letter of James was written not by either of the apostles, but by the “brother of the Lord” who was the first bishop of the Church in Jerusalem. (See Acts 15, Galatians 1:19) The letter is addressed to the **“twelve tribes in the dispersion”** which most probably means the Christians not of the Jerusalem Church.

The main purpose of the letter of James is to urge Christians to be steadfast in faith and to do those works which are called for by the **“perfect law”** of Christ which is the **“law of liberty.”** (1:25, 2:12) It aims to correct the false opinion that because Christians are freed from the ritual works of the Mosaic law through faith in Christ, they need not do any good works whatsoever and are not subject to any law at all. Thus, the author writes very clearly against the doctrine of salvation by **“faith alone”** without the good works that the believer must necessarily perform if his faith is genuine.

What does it profit, my brethren, if a man says he has faith but has not works. Can his faith save him? If a brother or sister is ill-clad and in lack of daily food and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what does it profit? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead.

Show me your faith apart from your works, and I by my works will show you my faith. You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe — and shudder. Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he offered his son Isaac upon the altar? You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by works, and the scripture was fulfilled which says, “Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness;” and he

was called the friend of God. You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone. (2:14-24)

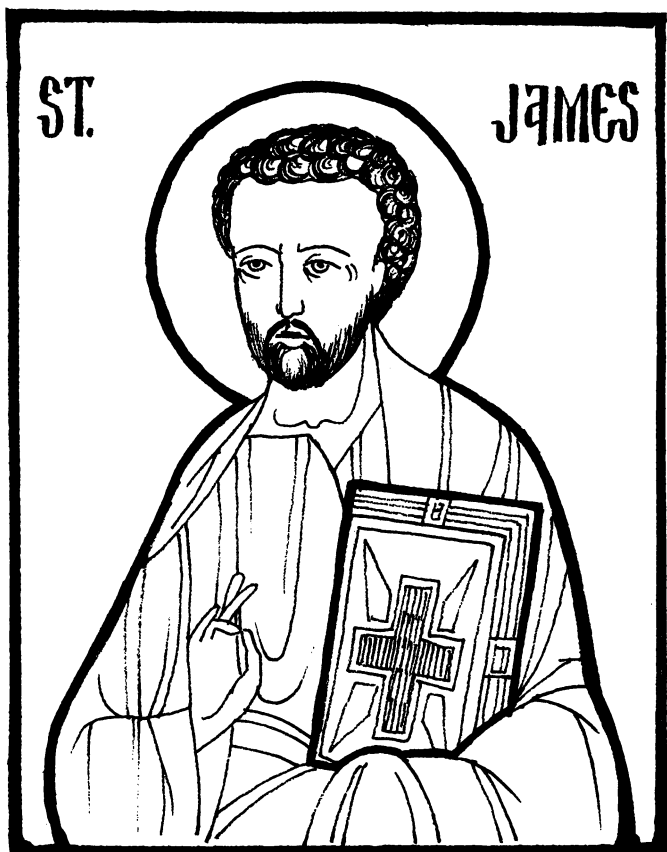
First among the good works which the letter insists upon most vehemently is the work of honoring and serving the poor and lowly without partiality and selfish greed which is the cause of all wars and injustices among men. (2:1-7) The author is passionately opposed to any **“friendship with the world”** which makes man an **“enemy of God”** because of covetousness. (4:1-4) He calls the rich to **“weep and howl for the miseries which are coming”** to them because of the **“luxuries and pleasures”** which they have attained at the expense of others whom they have exploited. (5:1-6)

Together with his despising of wealth, James teaches the absolute necessity of **“bridling the tongue,”** the **“little member”** which is a **“fire”** that man uses to boast, slander, condemn, swear, lie and speak evil against his brethren, **“staining the whole body”** and **“setting aflame the whole cycle of nature.”** (3:1-12)

If anyone thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this man’s religion is in vain. Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world. (1:26-27)

The teaching of the letter of James that **“every good gift and perfect gift is from above coming down from the Father of lights”** (1:17) has become part of the dismissal prayer of the divine liturgies of the Orthodox Church. The letter of James also provides the Church with the first epistle reading for its sacrament of the unction of the sick.

Is any among you suffering? Let him pray. Is any cheerful? Let him sing praise. Is any among you sick? Let him call for the presbyters (elders) of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith will save the sick man, and the Lord will raise him up; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. (5:13-16, See Book II on *Worship*)



Letters of St. Peter

Most modern scholars do not think that St. Peter actually wrote the two letters called by his name. They consider the first letter as coming from the end of the first century and the second letter from the first half of the second century. The Tradition of the Church, however, maintains the testimony of the letters themselves, ascribing them to the foremost leader of Christ's apostles writing from "Babylon", which was the early Church's name for Rome, on the eve of his martyrdom there in the latter half of the first century. (See 1 Peter 5:13, 2 Peter 1:14)

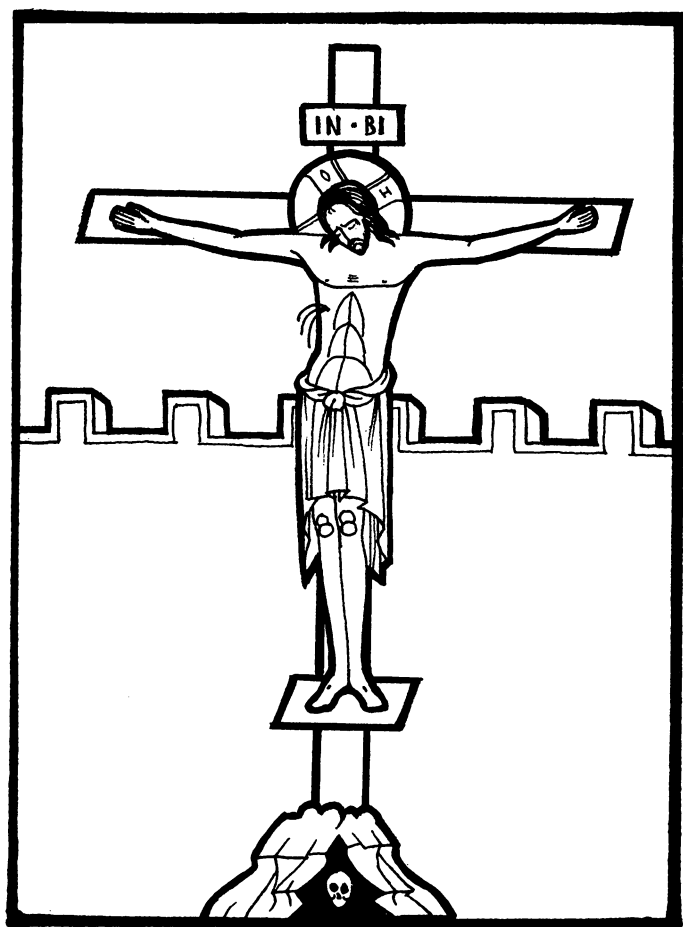
The first letter of St. Peter is a passionate plea to all of **"God's People"** to be strong in their sufferings in imitation of Christ and together with Him, maintaining **"good conduct among the Gentiles"**, subjecting themselves without malice or vindictiveness to **"every human institution for the Lord's sake."** (2:11-13)

Special instructions and exhortations to godliness are addressed first to the whole Church which is a **"chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people"** (2:9), and then in turn to the slaves (2:18), to the husbands and wives (3:1-7) and to the presbyters (elders) whom the author, as a **"fellow presbyter and a witness of the sufferings of Christ,"** calls to **"tend the flock of God . . . not by constraint, but willingly, not for shameful gain, but eagerly, not as domineering over those in (their) charge, but being examples to the flock."** (5:1-4)

Throughout the letter, the analogy is constantly drawn between the sufferings of Christ and the sufferings of Christians which is for their salvation.

But if when you do right and suffer for it you take it patiently, you have God's approval. For to this you have been called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in His steps. He committed no

sin; no guile was found on His lips. When He was reviled, He did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten; but He trusted to Him Who judges justly. He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By His wounds you have been healed. For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Guardian (literally Bishop) of your souls. (2:20-25)



The **second letter of St. Peter** is sometimes considered to be a sermon addressed to those who were newly baptized into the Christian faith. The author wishes before his death to “**arouse . . . by way of reminder**” (1:13, 3:1) what God has done for those who are called, that they might “**escape from the corruption that is in the world through passion, and become partakers of the divine nature.**” (1:3-4) He warns against the appearance of “**false prophets**” and “**scoffers**” who would lead the elect astray by their “**destructive heresies**” and denials of “**the Master who bought them**” thus causing them to fall back to a life of sin and ignorance as “**the dog turns back to his own vomit and the sow is washed only to wallow once more in the mire.**” (2:1-22, 3:1-7) The author makes special warning against the perversion of the holy scriptures, both those of the Old Testament and those of St. Paul, “**which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction.**” (3:16, 1:20)

The third chapter of the second letter of St. Peter is sometimes wrongly interpreted as teaching the total destruction of creation by God at the end of the world. The Orthodox interpretation is that it is only sin and evil that will be “**dissolved with fire**” on the “**day of God**”, and that the “**new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells**” will be the same “**very good**” world of God’s original creation, but purified, renewed and purged of all that is contrary to His divine goodness and holiness. (3:8-13, See Book I on *Doctrine*)

The reminiscence in the second letter of St. Peter about the transfiguration of Christ is the epistle reading at the Church’s feast of this sacred event. (1:16-18) Readings from both letters are found in the Church’s lectionary, with selections from the first letter being read at the vigil of the feast of Saints Peter and Paul.

Letters of St. John

The three letters of St. John were written by the Lord's beloved apostle who also wrote the fourth gospel. They were written at the close of the first century and have as their general theme a fervent polemic against the heretical "**antichrists**" who were changing the doctrines of Christ and denying His genuine appearance "**in the flesh**" for the salvation of the world, denying thereby both "**the Father and the Son.**" (1 John 2:22, 4:3, 2 John 7)

The first letter of St. John is the simplest and deepest exposition of the Christian faith that exists. Its clarity concerning the Holy Trinity and the Christian life of truth and of love in communion with God makes it understandable without difficulty to anyone who reads it. It is the best place to begin a study of the Christian faith generally, and the Bible in particular.

The first letter begins in the same way as St. John's gospel to which it is most similar in its entire content and style.

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life . . . we proclaim also to you, so that you may have communion with us; and our communion is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. And we are writing this that our joy may be complete.
(1:1-4)

The first letter of St. John proclaims that Jesus is truly "**the Christ**", the Messiah and Son of God who has come "**in the flesh**" to the world as "**the expiation of our sins, and not ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.**" (2:2) Those who believe in Christ and are in communion with Him and His Father have the forgiveness of sins and the possibility not to sin any more. (1:5-2:12) They "**walk in the same way in which He walked**" (2:6) being the "**children of**

God.” (3:1, 5:1) They know the truth by the direct inspiration of God through the anointment (chrisma) of the Holy Spirit. (2:20-26, 6:7) They keep the commandments of God, the first and greatest of which is love, and so they are already recipients of eternal life, already possessing the indwelling of God the Father and Christ the Son “by the Spirit which He has given us.” (2:24-3:24)

Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God; for God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God has sent His only Son into the world, so that we might live through Him.

In this is love, not that we loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the expiation of our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No man has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and His love is perfected in us.

By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His own Spirit. And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent His Son as the Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him and he in God. So we know and believe the love God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. (4:7-16)

The hatred of others is the sure sign that one does not love God (4:20) and is “in the darkness still.” (2:9-11) The one who hates his brother is “a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.” (3:15) Those who love God are hated by the world “which is in the power of the evil one.” (5:19, 2:15-17)

The first letter of St. John is part of the Church's lectionary, with special selections from it being read at the feast of the apostle John.

The second letter of St. John is addressed to the "elect lady and her children" which is obviously the Church of God and its members. Again the truth of Christ is stressed and the commandment of love is emphasized.

And this is love, that we follow His commandments; this is the commandment, as you have heard from the beginning, that you follow love. For many deceivers have gone out into the world, men who will not acknowledge the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh; such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist. Look to yourselves, that you may not lose what you have worked for, but may win a full reward. Anyone who goes ahead and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God; he who abides in the doctrine has both the Father and the Son. (6-9)

The third letter of St. John is addressed to a certain Gaius praising him for the "truth of his life" (3) and urging him not to "imitate evil but imitate good." (11) "No greater joy can I have than this", writes the beloved apostle, "to hear that my children follow the truth." (4)

Letter of St. Jude

It has been questioned whether “Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ and the brother of James” who wrote the letter of St. Jude is the “Judas, the brother of James” (Luke 6:16, Acts 1:13), one of the twelve apostles, “not Iscariot.” (John 14:22). In the Tradition of the Church, the two have usually been identified as the same person.

The letter of St. Jude is a general epistle which the author “found it necessary to write to those who are called,” appealing to them “to contend for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.” (1-3)

For admission has been secretly gained by some who long ago were designated for condemnation, ungodly persons who pervert the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord Jesus Christ. (4)

These “scoffers,” some of whom the faithful may be able to save “by snatching them out of the fire” (23), are those who “defile the flesh, reject authority and revile the glorious ones.” (8) They are those who follow their “ungodly passions . . . (and) set up divisions, worldly people devoid of the Spirit” (18-19) who have entered the Church.

Jude commands those who are faithful to resist the ungodly.

But you, beloved, build yourselves up on your holy faith; pray in the Holy Spirit; keep yourselves in the love of God; wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life (21)

Of special interest in the letter, which is sometimes read in Church, is the mention of the archangel Michael (9), as well as the evil angels “that did not keep their own position but left their proper dwelling (with God) and have been kept by Him in eternal chains in the nether gloom until the judgment of the great day.” (6) Generally speaking, there is a definite apocalyptic tone to the letter of St. Jude.

Book of Revelation

The **Book of Revelation**, also called the **Apocalypse** which means that which has been disclosed, and also called the **Revelation to St. John**, is traditionally considered to be the work of the Lord's apostle who later wrote the fourth gospel and the letters. It is dated in the middle of the last half of the first century.

St. John received his vision "**on the island called Patmos.**" He was "**in the Spirit on the Lord's day**" when he received God's command to write the letters "**to the seven churches of Asia.**" (1:4-10) Each of the seven messages contains the words of Christ for the specific church. (2-4)

Following the seven letters in the book of **Revelation**, the apostle records his vision of God on His throne in heaven being hymned unceasingly by angels, the "**living creatures**", and the "**twenty four elders**": "**Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come.**" (4)

There then follows the prophecies of the seven seals and the seven angels (5-11), and the visions of the "**women clothed with the sun**" and Michael and his angels engaged in battle with the "**dragon.**" (12) Next come the images of the "**beast rising from the sea**" and the "**other beast rising from the earth.**" (13) Then comes the vision of the Lamb and those who are saved by God, with the angels coming to earth from heaven bearing their "**bowls of wrath.**" (14-16) The image of the "**great harlot**" follows (17), with the final prophecy about the downfall of "**great Babylon**" (18) The end of the book of **Revelation** describes the wonderful vision of salvation, with the multitude of those "**blessed . . . who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb**" in the midst of the great celestial assembly of angels who sing glory to God and to Jesus, His Word and His Lamb, the Alpha and the Omega, the King of kings and the Lord of lords. It is the image of the Kingdom of God and of Christ, the Heavenly

Jerusalem foretold by the prophets of old in which the righteous shall reign forever with God. (19-22)

Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exalt and give Him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and the Bride (the Church) has made herself ready (19:6-7)

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away . . . And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband; and I heard a great voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them and they shall be His People, and God Himself will be with them; He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." (21:1-4)

And He Who sat upon the throne said, "Behold, I make all things new." (21:5)

It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without price from the fountain of life. He who conquers shall have this inheritance, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. (21:6-7)

There was a certain hesitation on the part of the early Church to include the book of **Revelation** in the canonical scriptures of the New Testament. The reason for this was obviously the great difficulty of interpreting the apocalyptic symbols of the book. Nevertheless, since the document carried the name of the apostle John, and since it was inspired by the Holy Spirit for the instruction and edification of the Church, it came to be the last book listed in the Bible, although it is never read liturgically in the Orthodox Church.

It is indeed difficult to interpret the book of **Revelation**, especially if one is unfamiliar with the images and symbols of the apocalyptic writings of the Bible, that is the Old Testament, and of the Judeo-Christian Tradition. There exists, however, a traditional approach to the interpretation of the book within the Church which offers insight into its meaning for the faithful.

The wrong method of interpreting the book of **Revelation** is to give some sort of exclusive meaning to its many visions, equating them with specific, concrete historical events and persons, and to fail to understand the symbolical significance of the many images which are used by the author following biblical and traditional sources.

First of all, the letters to the seven churches have both a historical and a universal meaning. The messages are clear and remain relevant to situations which have always existed in the Church and which exist today. For example, many older churches in all ages of history can be identified with the Church of Ephesus. Those under persecution can be compared with the Church in Smyrna. And not a few — perhaps some in America right now — can be judged with the Church in Laodicea. The seven letters remain forever as “prototypical” of churches that will exist until Christ’s kingdom comes.

The visions and prophecies of the main body of the book of **Revelation** present great difficulties, but mostly to those interpreters who would attempt to apply them to one or another historical event or person. If the general vision and prophecy of the book is seen as revealing the correlation between events “in heaven” and events “on earth,” between God and man, between the powers of goodness and the powers of evil, then, though many difficulties obviously remain, some will also immediately disappear.

In the book of **Revelation**, one comes to understand that the Kingdom of God is always over all and before

all. One sees as well that the battle between the righteous and the evil is perpetually being waged. There are always the faithful who belong to the Lamb, being crowned and robed by Him for their victories. There are always the “beasts” and the “dragons” which need to be defeated. The “great harlot” and the “great Babylon” are forever to be destroyed. The “heavenly Jerusalem” is perpetually coming, and one day it will come and the final victory will be complete.

One notices as well that there is a universality and finality about the symbols and images of the book of **Revelation**, a meaning to be applied to them which has already been revealed in the scriptures of the Old Testament. Thus, for example, the image of Babylon stands for every society which fights against God, every body of persons united in wickedness and fleshliness. The image of harlotry universally applies as well to all who are corrupted by their passions and lusts, unfaithful to God Who has made them and loves them. The symbolic numerology also remains constant, with the number 666 (13:18), for example, symbolizing total depravity, unlike 7 which is the symbol of fulness; and the number 144,000 (14:3) being the symbol of total completion and the full number of the saved, the result of the multiplication of 12 times 12 — the number of the tribes of Israel and the apostles of Christ. Thus, through the images of the book of **Revelation**, a depth of penetration into universal spiritual realities is disclosed which is greater than any particular earthly reality. The insight into the meaning of the book depends on the inspiration of God and the purity of heart of those who have eyes to see and ears to hear and minds willing and able to understand.

In the Orthodox Church, the book of **Revelation** has great liturgical significance. The worship of the Church has traditionally, quite consciously, been

patterned after the divine and eternal realities revealed in this book. The prayer of the Church and its mystical celebration are one with the prayer and celebration of the kingdom of heaven. Thus, in Church, with the angels and saints, through Christ the Word and the Lamb, inspired by the Holy Spirit, the faithful believers of the assembly of the saved offer perpetual adoration to God the Father Almighty. (See Book II on *Worship*)

The book of **Revelation**, although never read in the Orthodox Church, bears witness to the divine reality which is the Church's own very life.

The Spirit and the Bride (the Church) say, "Come." And let him who hears say, "Come." And let him who is thirsty come, let him who desires take the water of life without price.

"Surely I am coming soon," (says Jesus, the Lord.)

Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! (22:17,20)





Ι·ΑΝ·Τ·ΩΑΝ·Τ·ΤΕΤ·Α·Τ·Υ·Ε·ΛΕ

4

SALVATION HISTORY

Word and Spirit

It is the constant testimony of the Bible and the Church that God acts toward the world through His Word and His Spirit.

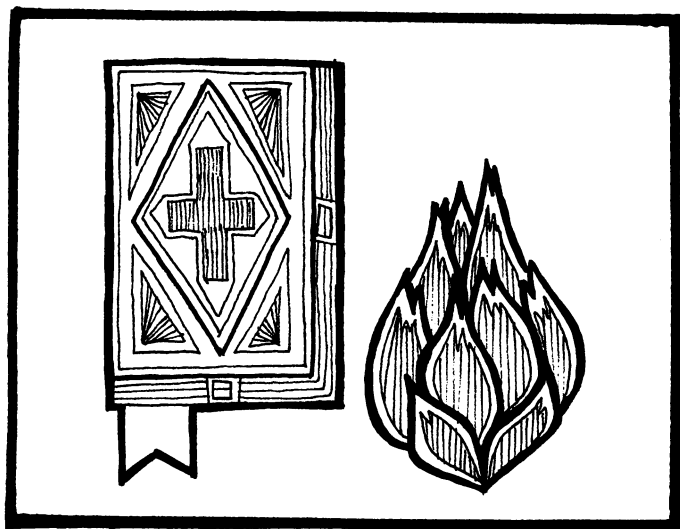
God created all things by His Word and His Spirit. He created man in His divine image and likeness to partake of His Word and to live by His Spirit. All of the holy people of God received the Word of God and the Spirit of God. The patriarchs, prophets, and apostles all proclaimed the Word which came to them from God by the Spirit of God. The law of Moses and the prophets, the psalms and all the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the Word of God, written and interpreted by men through the Spirit of God. Always and everywhere in the Bible and in the Church, God reveals Himself and acts in man and the world by His Word and His Spirit.

The central affirmation of the Christian Faith and the very essence of its gospel and life is that the Word of God became man as Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah of Israel and the Lord and Savior of the world. Jesus of Nazareth is the divine Word of God in human form. He is the personal Word of God Who was **“in the beginning with God,”** the Word **“by whom all things were made.”** (John 1:2) He is the uncreated Word of God according to Whose image all men are created. He is the Word of God Who came to the patriarchs and prophets and Who is incarnate in the Bible in scriptural form. He is the Word of God Who died on the cross and is risen from the dead. He is the Head of the Church which is His Body, and the King of the Kingdom of God. He is the Word of God with Whom and through Whom the Holy Spirit comes to the world.

The Holy Spirit of God comes personally to men from the Father through Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word of God. He comes to those who believe in Christ and belong to Him through faith and repentance and baptism in His Church. He is the Spirit Who descended

upon the disciples on Pentecost, who also is the One by whose power the world was created and continues to exist. He is the Spirit breathed into men by God to make them live according to His divine likeness. He is the Spirit Who inspired the Law, and the prophets and the entire holy scripture, providing for its production and preservation, as well as for its interpretation in the life of the faithful. He is the same Holy Spirit Who abides in the Church, making possible the fulness of its sacramental and spiritual life. He is the Spirit of God Who, by His presence with men in the world, is the pledge and the promise of God's Kingdom to come. He is the Holy Spirit of God Who will one day, on the Day of the Lord, fill all creation with the presence of God.

Thus, the entire creation, the salvation and glorification of the world, the whole of what we call "salvation history," depends on God and His Word and His Spirit, the Most Holy Trinity, Who in the Church and in the Kingdom, "fills all in all." (Ephesians 1:23; See Book I on *Doctrine* and Book II on *Worship*)



Pre-history

The Bible begins with the story of creation and the making of man. Although the Bible often lists the generations of men from the creation of Adam (Chronicles 1:1, Luke 4:38), the history of salvation, in the most proper sense, begins with Abraham, the forefather of Israel and the first ancestor of Christ, **“according to the flesh.”**

The story of creation, and specifically of Adam and Eve, gives the divine revelation about the absolute sovereignty of God over all of creation. It tells of the goodness of all things that exist, and the superiority of man over all other beings. It shows how the origin of evil does not lie in God but in His most perfect creature whose free act of sin brought wickedness and death to the world. (See Book I on *Doctrine*)

The chapters of Genesis 1-11 are called the **“pre-history”** of salvation because with little exception, such as that of the righteous Noah, these chapters are almost exclusively the record of sin. They begin with man’s original rebellion against God, and tell of the first act of man’s children as being brotherly murder. They record God’s sadness in creating the world when He **“saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of his heart was only evil continually,”** and that the earth was **“corrupt . . . filled with violence . . . for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth.”** (Genesis 6:5-12) They end with the symbolic account of the ultimate impudence of men who sought **“to make a name for themselves”** by building **“a tower with its top in the heavens.”** (Genesis 11:4) Through the story of the tower of Babel is shown the prideful arrogance of man which results in the division of the nations and the scattering of men **“over the face of all the earth.”** (Genesis 11:9)

The pre-history of salvation, the story of sin, is the original counter-symbol of salvation in Christ. The

events of these first chapters of the Bible, before the calling of Abraham, find their proper interpretation in the saving events of the coming of Christ and the Holy Spirit in the new and final covenant of God with His People.

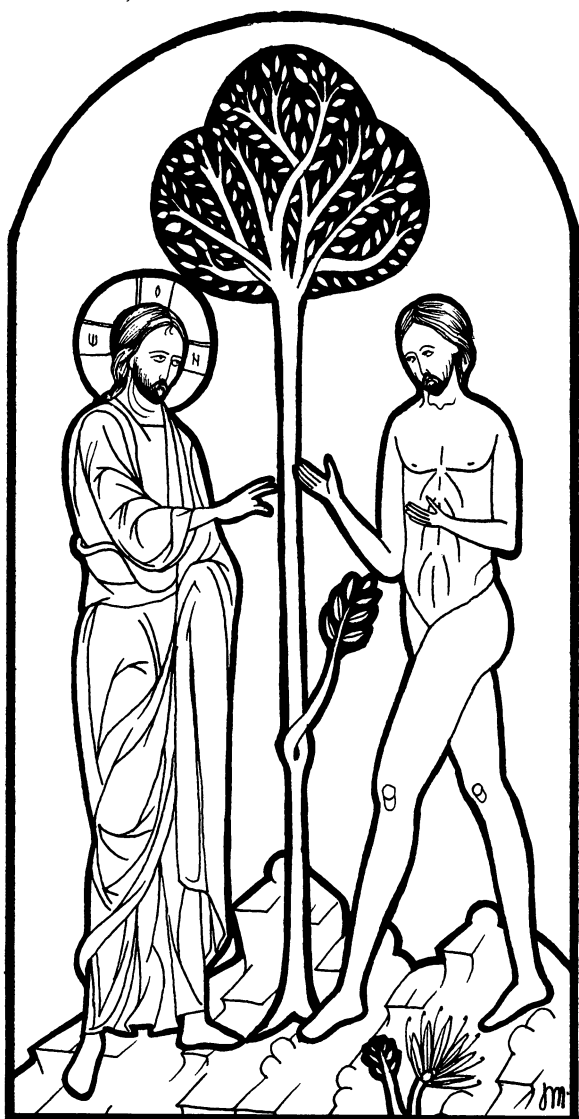
Christ is the True Adam. The original Adam was merely “a type of him who was to come.” (Romans 5:14)

For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.

Thus it is written, “The first man Adam became a living soul;” the last Adam (Christ) became a life-giving spirit. But it is not the spiritual which is first but the physical, and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man is from heaven. As was the man of dust, so are those who are of the dust; and as is the man of heaven, so are those who are of heaven. Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven. (1 Corinthians 15:21-22, 45-49)

The word **Adam** in Hebrew comes from “**adamah**” which means earth. The word **Christ**, in Hebrew, **Messiah**, means the “anointed” of God. As Christ is the new Adam, so His mother Mary is the new Eve, for she is the true “mother of all living,” which is the meaning of the name given to the original “helper” of man. (Genesis 3:20) The biblical symbolism continues with the Church of Christ being the true “ark of salvation” in which “every living thing” is saved. (Genesis 6:19, 1 Peter 3:20-22) And the events of Pentecost reverse the tragedy of Babel, when through the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Church of Christ, all national divisions are overcome and all men “from over the face of all the earth” are brought into unity by God in Christ.

Thus the pre-history of man's sin is the counter-symbol of his righteousness in God which is realized in Christ, the "child of Abraham" in whose children all of the families of the earth are blessed by God. (Genesis 12:3)



Abraham

Salvation history, properly so-called, begins with Abram, whom God named **Abraham** which means “father of a multitude.” Abraham was the first patriarch of the people of Israel. The word **patriarch** means “the father of the people.” In the person and life of Abraham, the central events of the salvation of the world by Christ in the New Testament have been pre-figured.

God made the first promise of His salvation of all the people of the earth to Abraham, with whom He also made His covenant to be faithful forever.

Now the Lord said to Abram, “Go from your country and kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you. And I will make you a great nation, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing . . . and in you all families of the earth shall be blessed.” (Genesis 12:1-3, See also 17:1-8, 22:1-18)

The fulfillment of the promise to Abraham comes in Jesus Christ. He is the descendent of Israel’s first father in whom all the families of the earth are blessed. Thus, Mary, the Mother of Jesus, sings at her time of waiting for the Savior’s birth, that all generations will call her blessed because the fulfillment has come from God “as He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his posterity forever.” (Luke 1:55, see also Zachariah’s Song in Luke 1:67-79) All through the New Testament the claim is made that God’s promise to Abraham is fulfilled in Jesus.

Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, “And to offsprings,” referring to many; but, referring to one, “And to your offspring,” which is Christ. (Galatians 3:16)

The faith of Abraham is prototypical of all those who in Christ are saved by faith. The New Testament

stresses faith as necessary for salvation. The model for this faith is Abraham.

Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. (Genesis 15:6, Romans 4:3)

Abraham's faith was united to his works, and was expressed in his works.

Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he offered his son Isaac upon the altar? You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by works, and the scripture was fulfilled which says, "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness;" and he was called the friend of God. You see that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone. (James 2:21-24)

God tested Abraham by commanding him to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac as a burnt offering. Abraham believed and trusted in God. He obeyed his will, and went to the mountain to slay his child. God stopped him and placed a ram in Isaac's place saying **"for now I know that you fear God, seeing that you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me."** (Genesis 22:12) Then once more God made the promise that **"by your descendents shall all of the nations of the earth be blessed . . ."** (Genesis 22:18)

The sacrifice of Isaac is not only a testimony to Abraham's faith. It is also the original sign that God Himself does what He does not allow the first and foremost of His People to do. No ram is put in the place of God's Son, His only Son Jesus, when He is sacrificed on the cross for the sins of the world.

The perfect **priesthood** of Christ is also prefigured in Abraham's life. It is the priesthood of Melchizedek, the King of Peace. It is the priesthood in which the offering is bread and wine. It is the priesthood which is before that of the Levites, and the one which is that

of the Messiah, Who is “a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.” (Psalm 110:4, Hebrews 5-10)

So also Christ did not exalt Himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by Him Who said to Him, “Thou art my Son, today I have begotten thee;” as He says also in another place, “Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek.”

In the days of His flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to Him Who was able to save Him from death, and He was heard for His godly fear. Although He was a Son, He learned obedience through what He suffered; and being made perfect He became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey Him, being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek. (Hebrews 5:5-10)

For this Melchizedek, king of Salem, priest of the Most High God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings and blessed him; and to him Abraham apportioned a tenth part of everything. He is first, by translation of his name, king of righteousness, and then he is also king of Salem, that is king of peace. He is without father or mother or genealogy, and has neither beginning of days nor end of life, but resembling the Son of God he continues a priest for ever. (Hebrews 7:1-3)

The most sublime of the New Testament revelations, that of the Holy Trinity, was also prefigured in Abraham's life. This is the famous visit of the three angels of God to Abraham under the oaks of Mamre.

And the Lord appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. He lifted up his eyes and looked,

and behold, three men stood in front of him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them, and bowed himself to the earth, and said, "My lord, if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by your servant. Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree, while I fetch a morsel of bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on . . . since you have come to your servant." So they said, "Do as you have said." (Genesis 18:1-5)

Abraham addresses the three angels as one, calling them Lord. They eat in his presence and foretell the birth of Isaac from Sarah in her old age. In this visitation of God to Abraham, the Orthodox Church sees the prefiguration of the full revelation of the Holy Trinity in the New Testament.

Because there can be no depiction of God the Father and the Holy Spirit in human form, Orthodox iconography has traditionally painted the Holy Trinity in the form of the three angels who came to Abraham. The most famous icon of the Holy Trinity, the one often used in the Church on the feast of Pentecost, is that of Saint Andrew Rublev, a disciple of Saint Sergius of Radonezh in Russia in the fourteenth century.

Thus the salvation of the world which has come in Christ was prefigured in the life of Abraham, as well as the Christian doctrine about faith and works and the Christian revelations about the sacrifice, the priesthood, and even the most Holy Trinity. Truly in Abraham every aspect of the final covenant in Christ the Messiah was foreshadowed and foretold.



Passover

The central event of the entire Old Testament history is the **passover** and **exodus**.

Abraham's son Isaac was the father of Jacob whom God named **Israel** which means "**he who strives with God.**" (**Genesis 32:28**) God renewed His promise to **Isaac** and **Jacob**, and continued the covenant with them that He had made with Abraham.

Jacob had twelve sons who became the leaders of the twelve tribes or houses of Israel. The sons of Jacob sold their youngest brother **Joseph** into slavery in Egypt. With the help of God, Joseph gained the favor of the Egyptian pharaoh and became a great man in Egypt. In a time of famine, Joseph's brothers came to Egypt for food. Joseph recognized them and brought all of the people of Israel into Egypt with him. When Joseph died, the people of Israel were put into slavery by the Egyptians for four hundred years. (See **Genesis 24-50**)

God raised up **Moses** to lead His people out of bondage in Egypt. He appeared to Moses in the burning bush and revealed His Name to him.

Then Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?"

God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Say to the people of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.' "

God also said to Moses, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'The Lord (Yahweh), the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, has sent me to you': this is my name for ever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations." (**Exodus 3:14-15**)

Moses returned to Egypt and after many trials with the Egyptian pharaoh and after many plagues which

God sent upon the Egyptians, he led the people of Israel out of slavery. The **exodus**, which means the escape or the departure, from Egypt took place on the night called the **passover**.

God, through Moses, ordered the Israelites to select lambs, to kill them and place some blood on the two doorposts and the lintel of their houses. Standing up, clothed and ready to escape, they were to eat the lambs in the night.

In this manner you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat in haste. It is the Lord's passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will smite all the first-born in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord. The blood shall be a sign for you, upon the houses where you are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague shall fall upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt. This day shall be a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the Lord; throughout your generations you shall observe it as an ordinance forever. (Exodus 12:11-13)

Thus, the passover and exodus took place. At midnight the Lord slew the Egyptian first-born. The houses marked with blood were spared when the Lord passed over. During the tumult, the Israelites began to escape. They made their exodus through the Red Sea. By this time, the Egyptian horsemen were in pursuit. At the sea, Moses prayed to God. He lifted his rod over the waters and **"The Lord drove the sea back by a strong East wind all night, and made the sea dry land . . ."** (Exodus 14:21) The Israelites passed through the sea on foot. The pursuing chariots of the Egyptians were caught in the waters and were drowned.

And Israel saw the great work which the Lord did against the Egyptians, and the people feared the Lord; and they believed in the Lord and in His servant Moses. (Exodus 14:31)

In the wilderness on the other side of the sea, the people of Israel began to complain. There was no food and drink in the desert. Moses prayed to the Lord, Who provided water for the people to drink and manna, the “bread from heaven,” for the people to eat. (Exodus 15-16) God led the people through the desert by a cloud and a pillar of fire.

On Mount Sinai, Moses received the Ten Commandments and the laws of morality and worship from the Lord Who “used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.” (Exodus 33:11) Moses was allowed to behold the glory of the Lord in the smoke and clouds on the mountain top and he himself shone with the majesty of God. (Exodus 34:29)

Moses was not granted to cross the Jordan and to enter the promised land. He died and was buried near Mount Nebo in the land of Moab. This is where he had looked across the Jordan River into the land where his successor Joshua would lead the people.

The passover and exodus was the central event in Israelite history. It was remembered in all generations as the great sign of God’s fidelity and favor to His People. It was sung about in the psalms and recalled by the prophets. It was celebrated annually together with Pentecost, as the chief celebration of the People of God. And, consequently, it was also the main event of the Old Testament to be fulfilled perfectly and eternally in the time of Christ, the Messiah of God.

In Jesus Christ the ultimate meaning and universal purpose of the passover and exodus are revealed and accomplished. Jesus Christ is Himself the **New Passover**. He is the **Passover Lamb** which is slain for the deliverance and liberation of all men and the whole

world from the powers of evil. The real “pharoah” is the devil. He holds all men in slavery. The real deliverer is Jesus. He leads the people from the captivity of sin and death into the “promised land” of the Kingdom of God.

As the people pass through the wilderness of life in this world, they are fed by Jesus, the true Bread of Life, the true “bread from heaven.”

Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven; my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is that which came down from heaven, and gives life to the world.”

“I am the bread of life; he who comes to me shall not hunger, and he who believes in me shall never thirst.”

“I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness and they died. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that a man may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any one eats of this meal, he will live forever; and the bread which I shall give for the life of the world is my flesh.”

“Truly, truly I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is food indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood abides in me and I in him. As the living Father has sent me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats me will live because of me. This is the bread which came down from heaven, not such as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live forever.” (John 6:25-59)

Jesus is not only the true “bread from heaven,” He is also the true “living water.” He is the One Whom, if men drink of Him, they will never thirst again.

“If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water.’ ” (John 7:37)

“... whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” (John 4:14)

Saint Paul, speaking of the exodus and the rock which Moses struck, from which the spring of water flowed, says plainly that this refers to Christ.

I want you to know, brethren, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and all ate the same spiritual food and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock which followed them, and the Rock was Christ. (1 Corinthians 10:1-4)

Thus it is that Jesus Christ fulfilled the passover and exodus in the events of His life. This fulfillment came to its climax at the time of His crucifixion and resurrection. Jesus was killed at the feast of the passover to show that the old passover has been completed and the new passover has begun. When the paschal lamb was being killed in the temple, Jesus, the **Lamb of God**, was being crucified on the cross outside the city. When the great day of the passover, which that year was the Sabbath, was being observed as the rest from work, Jesus lay dead, resting from all His work, in the tomb. When the “day after Sabbath” dawned, the first day of the week, the day of God’s original creation, Jesus arose from the dead. All of this took place that the New Passover and New Exodus could be effected, not from Egypt into Canaan, but from death

to life, from wickedness to righteousness, from darkness to light, from earth to heaven, from the tyranny of the devil to the glorious freedom of the Kingdom of God. The death and resurrection of Christ is the true passover-exodus of the People of God. Those who are marked with Christ's blood are spared from the visitation of death.

Jesus inaugurated the celebration of the new passover at the **last supper** with His disciples which was the paschal meal. He told them that no longer would they keep the passover feast in remembrance of the old exodus. They now would keep the paschal celebration in remembrance of Him.

For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when He was betrayed took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, "This is my body which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes. (1 Corinthians 11: 23-26; See also Matthew 26:26-29, Mark 14:22-25, Luke 22:14-19)

In the same letter, Saint Paul also says:

. . . Christ our Passover Lamb has been sacrificed. Let us, therefore, celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. (1 Corinthians 5:7-8)

Of great importance also in the new passover of Christ is the new gift of God's law, the law not written on tablets of stone, but on human hearts by the very **Holy Spirit of God**. (See 2 Corinthians 3, Jeremiah 31:31-34, Ezekial 36:26-27, Joel 2:28-29)

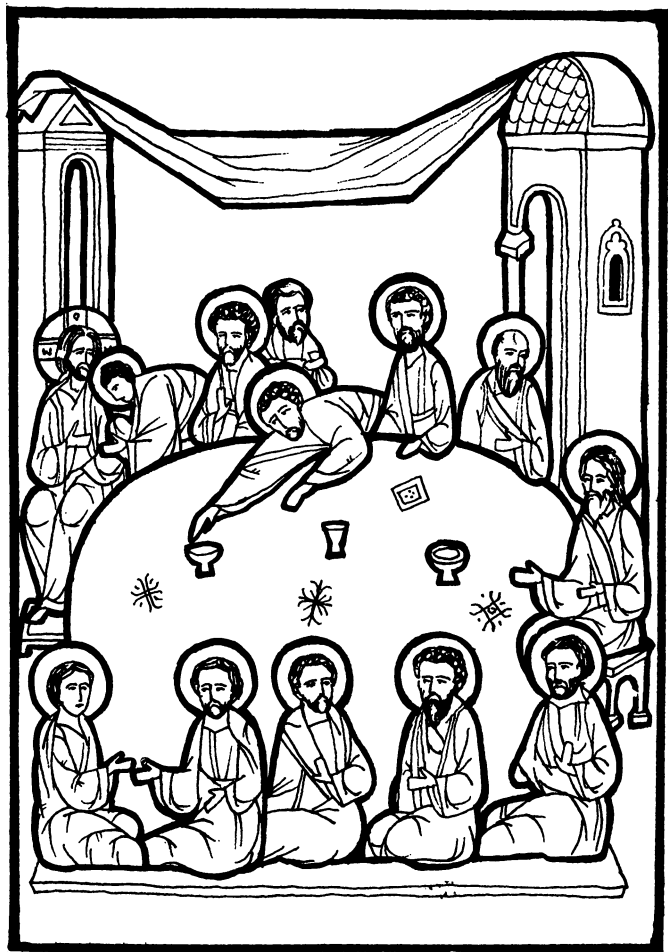
The giving of the law to Moses on Mount Sinai is fulfilled in the time of the Messiah in the giving of the Holy Spirit to the disciples of Christ in the upper room on the feast of Pentecost. In the Old Testament, this was the festival of the reception of the law, fifty days after the passover. (Acts 2) Thus, once again, in the time of the Messiah, the old event is completed in the new and final one: the exterior law of Moses is completed by the interior law of Christ, the “**perfect law, the law of liberty**” (James 1:25, 2:12), the “**law of the Holy Spirit.**” (Romans 8:2)

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death. For God had done (in Christ) what the law (of Moses), weakened by the flesh, could not do: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin . . . in order that the just requirements of the law (of Moses) might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. (Romans 8:2-4, See also 2 Corinthians 3, Galatians 3-5)

Thus the apostle John writes: “**For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.**” (John 1:17)

Within the total fulfillment and perfection of the passover-exodus of the Old Testament in the time of the Messiah, it must be noted as well that the crossing of the Jordan into the promised land corresponds to baptism in Christ into the Kingdom of God. Also worthy of note is the symbolic fact that the one who actually crossed the Jordan and brought the people into the “**land flowing with milk and honey,**” was not Moses but **Joshua**, whose name in Greek is **Jesus**, thus prefiguring the One Who was to come of the same name, which means **Savior**, the One Who began His messianic mission of bringing the Kingdom of God by His baptism in the Jordan River.

Thus, every aspect of the old passover-exodus is completed in Christ, perfectly, totally and forever. All of this is renewed and relived in the Church of Christ each year on Easter and Pentecost, and on each Sunday, the Day of the Lord. Whenever the Church gathers, it celebrates the perfect passover of Christ the Lamb of God, Who is also the divine I AM Who exists eternally with God the Father and the Holy Spirit, Who was slain for the life of the world. (See Book I on *Doctrine* and Book II on *Worship*)



Kingship

In the Old Testament, God was to be the **King** of His People. But wishing to be like the other nations, the Israelites asked the Lord for a human king.

Then all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, and said to him, "Behold, you are old and your sons do not walk in your ways; now appoint for us a king to govern us like all the nations." But the thing displeased Samuel when they said, "Give us a king to govern us." And Samuel prayed to the Lord. And the Lord said to Samuel, "Hearken to the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them. According to all the deeds which they have done to me, from the day I brought them up out of Egypt even to this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are also doing to you. Now then, hearken to their voice; only you shall solemnly warn them, and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them." (1 Samuel 8:4-9)

So Samuel recounted to the people all that would happen to them if they lived like the other nations having a man as their king. The king would send their sons to war. He would put all the people to work for him. He would take their best animals and crops. He would make the people his slaves.

"And in that day you will cry out because of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves; but the Lord will not answer you in that day." But the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel; and they said, "No! but we will have a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may govern us and go out before us and fight our battles." And when Samuel had heard all the words of the people, he repeated them in the ears of the Lord. And the

**Lord said to Samuel, “Hearken to their voice,
and make them a king.” (1 Samuel 8:18-22)**

Israel received its king. The first was **Saul** who became demented. The second was **David** the Shepherd who ruled well. The third was **Solomon** who was known for his wisdom and who built the temple to God in Jerusalem. But then there was a division of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, and strife among them because of their sins, which resulted in a succession of captivities to various foreign powers from which the people never finally escaped.

The psalms and prophets of the Old Testament constantly recalled God’s people to the reality that only the Lord is king. He alone is the True Shepherd of His People. He alone is the One Who rules and Who is to be served and obeyed.

**I will extol Thee, my God and King,
and bless Thy name for ever and ever.
Every day I will bless Thee,
and praise Thy name for ever and ever.
Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised,
and His greatness is unsearchable.**

**All Thy works shall give thanks to Thee, O Lord,
and all Thy saints shall bless Thee!
They shall speak of the glory of Thy kingdom
and tell of Thy power,
to make known to the sons of men Thy mighty
deeds,
and the glorious splendor of Thy kingdom.
Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,
and Thy dominion endures throughout all
generations. (Psalm 145:1-3, 10-13)**

The prophets called all of the earthly kings, the “shepherds of Israel,” to repentance before the divine King of heaven, but their words were mostly to no avail.

The word of the Lord came to me: “Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say to them, even to the shepherds, Thus says the Lord God: Ho, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep? You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fatlings; but you do not feed the sheep. The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the crippled you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought, and with force and harshness you have ruled them. So they were scattered, because there was no shepherd; and they became food for all the wild beasts. My sheep were scattered over all the mountains and on every high hill; my sheep were scattered over all the face of the earth, with none to search or seek for them.” (Ezekiel 34: 1-6)

The psalms and the prophets of the Old Testament also foretold the time when God would rule His People directly. He would be the shepherd of all nations, ruling through the Messiah-King Who would come from the house of David, the King of Whose kingdom there would be no end.

**For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government will be upon His shoulder,
and His name will be called
“Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”
Of the increase of His government and of peace
there will be no end,
upon the throne of David, and over His kingdom,
to establish it, and to uphold it
with justice and with righteousness**

from this time forth and for evermore.
The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

(Isaiah 9:6-7)

“Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, and He shall reign as king and deal wisely, and shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. In His days Judah will be saved, and Israel will dwell securely. And this is the name by which He will be called: ‘The Lord is our righteousness.’” (Jeremiah 23:5-6)

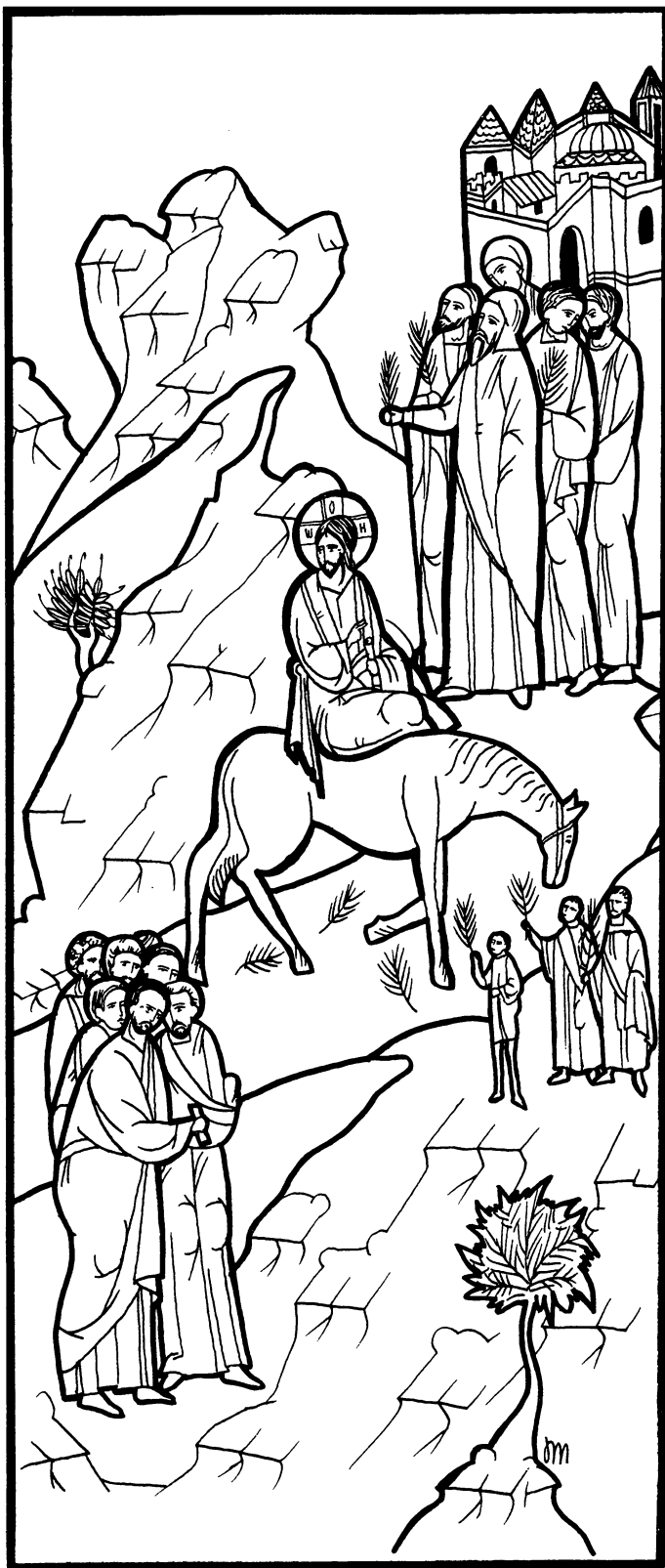
But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah,
who are little to be among the clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
one is to be ruler in Israel,
whose origin is from of old,
from ancient days.

Therefore he shall give them up until the time
when she who is in travail has brought forth;
then the rest of his brethren shall return
to the people of Israel.

And He shall stand and feed His flock
in the strength of the Lord,
in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.
And they shall dwell secure, for now
He shall be great
to the ends of the earth. (Micah 5:2-4)

For thus says the Lord God: Behold, I, I myself
will search for my sheep, and will seek them out.
As a shepherd seeks out his flock when some of
his sheep have been scattered abroad, so will I
seek out my sheep; and I will rescue them from
all places where they have been scattered on a
day of clouds and thick darkness.

I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep,
and I will make them lie down, says the Lord
God. I will seek the lost, and I will bring back



the strayed, and I will bind up the crippled, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will watch over; I will feed them in justice. (Ezekiel 34:11-12, 15-16)

**Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!
Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!
Lo, your king comes to you;
triumphant and victorious is he,
humble and riding on an ass,
on a colt the foal of an ass.
I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim
and the war horse from Jerusalem;
and the battle bow shall be cut off,
and He shall command peace to the nations;
His dominion shall be from sea to sea,
and from the River to the ends of the earth.**

(Zechariah 9:9-10)

The king of the final kingdom of God is Jesus Christ. He is the One Shepherd and Lord. He is the One "of whose kingdom there will be no end." Thus, the angel Gabriel speaks to Mary at the announcement of His birth:

**"He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High;
and the Lord God will give to Him the throne of His father David,
and He will reign over the house of Jacob for ever;
and of His kingdom there will be no end."**

(Luke 1:32-33)

All of His life, Jesus was preparing the everlasting Kingdom of God. He came to bring this Kingdom to men. He is the Son of David, Who will reign forever. He is the One Who announces the gospel of the Kingdom of God. (Matthew 4:23, 9:35)

Being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming, He answered them, "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be

observed; nor will they say, ‘Lo, here it is!’ or ‘There!’ for behold, the kingdom of God is in the midst of you.” (Luke 17:20-21)

The Kingdom of God is in the midst of men when Christ is present. He Himself is the King Who gives the Kingdom of God to those who are His.

Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. (Luke 12:32)

You are those who have continued with me in my trials; as my Father appointed a kingdom for me, so do I appoint for you that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom . . . (Luke 22:28-30)

All of the preaching and parables of Christ concerning the Kingdom of God speak of Himself as the King. Those who believe in Jesus and obey Him will reign with Him in His Kingdom which has been prepared **“from the foundation of the world”** for those who love Him. (Matthew 25:34) His Kingdom is the everlasting kingdom which is **“not of this world,”** but of God the Father. (John 18:36)

The gospel narratives of the crucifixion of Christ place Him in His role as King. All of the mockery and torment of Jesus is given to Him as the **“King of the Jews.”** This was the accusation against Him and the title nailed to the cross. Thus, the irony is complete as the scriptures are fulfilled in the words of Pilate when, after Jesus had sat down on the judgment seat, Pilate proclaimed to the people, **“Behold, your king!”** (John 19:14)

Jesus is the King. He is one with God, the **“King of kings and Lord of lords.”** (1 Timothy 6:5) He is the One **“highly exalted”** over all principalities and powers, the One before Whom every knee shall bow **“In heaven, and on earth and under the earth.”** (Philippians 2:9-11, also Ephesians 1:20-23). He is the One Who, at the end

of the ages when He “comes in His kingdom” with all the heavenly powers, will destroy every evil, and rule over all creation forever as the prophets predicted.

... and the Lamb (Christ) will conquer them (the wicked), for He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and those with Him are called and chosen and faithful. (Revelation 17:14)

Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! He who sat upon it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on His head are many diadems; and He has a name inscribed which no one knows but Himself. He is clad in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which He is called is The Word of God. And the armies of heaven, arrayed in fine linen, white and pure, followed Him on white horses. From His mouth issues a sharp sword with which to smite the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron; He will tread the wine press of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty. On His robe and on His thigh He has a name inscribed, King of kings and Lord of lords. (Revelation 19:11-16)

Then He showed me the river of the water of Life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. There shall no more be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall worship Him; they shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads. And night shall be no more; they need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they shall reign for ever and ever. (Revelation 22:1-5)

Priesthood

When speaking of Abraham, we mentioned how Jesus Christ is the “priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.” (see above p. 74) As the “priest for ever,” Jesus is also the completion and fulfillment of the Old Testament priesthood of the Levites.

In the Old Testament, God ordered Moses to build the tabernacle with a sanctuary for worship and sacrifice.

And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst. According to all that I show you concerning the tabernacle, and all of its furniture, so you shall make it. (Exodus 25:8-9)

In the tabernacle there was a sanctuary surrounded by a court yard. Within the sanctuary was the “most holy place.” A special ark was built to hold the tables of the covenant law surrounded by two cherubim. The ark was kept in the most holy place. Above the ark of the covenant was the mercy seat from which Moses would speak to the people. (Exodus 25:19-22)

In the sanctuary, special tables were placed which held “plates and dishes for incense” and “flagons and bowls with which to pour libations.”

. . . of pure gold you shall make them. And you shall set the bread of the Presence on the table before me always. (Exodus 25:29-30)

There also was the golden altar upon which the animal sacrifices were offered.

A lampstand of gold, with “seven lamps for it” which were lighted with pure olive oil, was placed in the sanctuary. And between the various part of the tabernacle, curtains were hung.

“And you shall make a veil of blue and purple and scarlet stuff and fine twined linen; in skilled work shall it be made, with cherubim; and you shall hang it upon four pillars of acacia overlaid with gold, with hooks of gold, upon four bases of

silver. And you shall hang the veil from the clasps, and bring the ark of the testimony in thither within the veil; and the veil shall separate for you the holy place from the most holy. You shall put the mercy seat upon the ark of the testimony in the most holy place. And you shall set the table outside the veil, and the lampstand on the south side of the tabernacle opposite the table; and you shall put the table on the north side. And you shall make a screen for the door of the tent, of blue and purple and scarlet stuff and fine twined linen, embroidered with needlework. And you shall make for the screen five pillars of acacia, and overlay them with gold; their hooks shall be of gold, and you shall cast five bases of bronze for them. You shall make the altar of acacia wood, five cubits long and five cubits broad; the altar shall be a square, and its height shall be three cubits. And you shall make horns for it on its four corners; its horns shall be of one piece with it, and you shall overlay it with bronze. (Exodus 26:31 - 27:2)

The priests of the tabernacle were to be the Levites, the men from the tribe of Levi.

Then bring near to you Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, from among the people of Israel, to serve me as priests . . . (Exodus 28:1)

God commanded that special vestments be made for the priests to wear when serving in the sanctuary. (Exodus 28) He also ordered that special oil be blended for the anointing of all of the utensils of the tabernacle, as well as for the anointing of the priests. He also ordered special incense to be made for burning in the holy place.

. . . you shall consecrate them (the furniture and utensils), that they may be holy; whatever touches them will become holy. And you shall

anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them, that they may serve me as priests. And you shall say to the people of Israel, 'This is my holy anointing oil throughout your generations.' (Exodus 30:29-31)

And the incense which you shall make according to its composition, you shall not make for yourselves; it shall be for you holy to the Lord. (Exodus 30:37)

God also provided a very detailed code concerning worship and the offering of the various sacrifices. He explained which animals should be selected and how they should be killed. He told which offerings should be made on which occasions and for what purposes. He gave instructions about offerings for peace and for praise, for thanksgiving and mercy, for forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God in times of transgression. He also told which feasts should be observed, when they should be kept and how they should be celebrated. The books of **Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy** are filled with such specific and detailed instructions.

While passing through the desert and into the promised land, the People of God carried the tabernacle with them. They set it up in each place where they camped. Finally, after the crossing of the Jordan River and the settlement in Canaan, the city of Jerusalem was established by David the king. David's son Solomon was then commanded by God to build the temple in which the worship of God would take place and the ritual sacrifices would be offered.

In the four hundred and eightieth year after the people of Israel came out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel . . . he began to build the house of the Lord. (1 Kings 6:1)

The house of the Lord was of the same pattern as Moses' tabernacle. It had the outer court, the inner sanctuary and the most holy place in which the ark of the covenant was kept. It had the altars for incense, libations and burnt offerings. It had the lampstands and the table for the bread of the Presence. It had all of the utensils and vestments necessary for the service of the Lord. (See 1 Kings 6-8)

When Solomon finished building the temple, (c. 960 B.C.) he conducted a great celebration of dedication.

Then the priests brought the ark of the covenant of the Lord to its place, in the inner sanctuary of the house, in the most holy place, underneath the wings of the cherubim.

There was nothing in the ark except the two tablets of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb, where the Lord made a covenant with the people of Israel, when He brought them out of the land of Egypt. And when the priests came out of the holy place, a cloud filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord. Then Solomon said, "The Lord has set the sun in the heavens, but has said that He would dwell in thick darkness. I have built thee an exalted house, a place for thee to dwell in for ever." (1 Kings 8:6, 9-13)

Solomon then blessed the people and addressed them concerning the building of the temple which the Lord promised David that his son would build. He then offered a long prayer of dedication, asking God to be with the people and to receive their prayers offered in the temple.

"But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain thee; how much less this house which I have

built! Yet have regard to the prayer of thy servant and to his supplication, O Lord my God, hearkening to the cry and to the prayer which Thy servant prays before Thee this day; that Thine eyes may be open night and day toward this house, the place of which Thou hast said, 'My name shall be there,' that Thou mayest hearken to the prayer which Thy servant offers toward this place. And hearken Thou to the supplication of Thy servant and of Thy people Israel, when they pray toward this place; yea, hear Thou in heaven Thy dwelling place; and when Thou hearest, forgive." (1 Kings 8:27-30)

Thus, the temple which Solomon built to the Lord became the sole place for the formal worship and the priestly sacrifices of the People of God. The temple was destroyed during the time of Babylonian captivity, and was restored in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah only to be defiled again by foreign invaders, and finally destroyed completely by the Romans in the year 70 A.D.

It was prophesied in the Old Testament that the time would come when the glory of the Lord would fill all creation. It was foretold that in the time of the Messianic King, God would dwell in men as in His holy temple. The ritual sacrifices of the temple would cease, as the perfect and everlasting covenant of mercy and peace would be accomplished between God and man. (See Isaiah 55:3, 61:1-11, 66:18-23, Jeremiah 31:31-34. Ezekiel 34:22-31, 37:24-28)

When Jesus came, the new and everlasting covenant between God and man was established forever. The temple of God became the body of Christ, which was the assembly of His people filled with the Holy Spirit of God. Indeed, one of the accusations against Jesus at the time of His crucifixion was that He said that He would destroy the temple in Jerusalem.

The Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple He found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers at their business. And making a whip of cords, He drove them all, with the sheep and oxen, out of the temple; and He poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. And He told those who sold the pigeons, "Take these things away; you shall not make my Father's house a house of trade." His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for thy house will consume me." The Jews then said to Him, "What sign have you to show us for doing this?" Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews then said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will you raise it up in three days?" But He spoke of the temple of His body. When therefore He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken. (John 2:13-22)

Now the chief priests and the whole council sought false testimony against Jesus that they might put Him to death, but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward and said, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.'" And the high priest stood up and said, "Have you no answer to make? What is it that these men testify against you?" But Jesus was silent. And the high priest said to Him, "I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God." Jesus said to him, "You have said so. But I tell you, hereafter you will see the Son of man seated at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven." (Matthew 26:59-64)

In Christ, the Messiah, human persons become the temple of the Living God. The deacon Stephen, the first Christian martyr, bore witness to this and died for his testimony. (See Acts 7:44-59) The apostle Paul also taught this explicitly, as did the apostle Peter.

But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near in the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in His flesh the law of commandments and ordinances, that He might create in Himself one new man in place of two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby bringing the hostility to an end. And He came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; for through Him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. (Ephesians 2:13-22)

Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If any one destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and that temple you are. (1 Corinthians 3:16-17)

Come to Him, to that living stone, rejected by men but in God's sight chosen and precious; and like living stones be yourselves built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer

spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in scripture: “Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and he who believes in Him will not be put to shame.” (1 Peter 2:4-6)

Jesus Christ is not only the living temple of God — God Himself in human flesh — through whom all men become God’s temple in the Holy Spirit; Jesus is also the one great **high priest** and the one perfect **sacrificial offering**, Who assumes and fulfills the entire Levitical priesthood of the Old Testament which was merely a “shadow” of the “reality” to come. Upon the cross, Jesus sacrificed Himself. He rose from the dead and entered the sanctuary in heaven. After this, there is no other priesthood and no other sacrifice well-pleasing to God. (See Hebrews 6-10)

But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tabernacle (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) He entered once for all into the Holy Place, taking not the blood of goats and calves but His own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. For if the sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of goats and bulls and with the ashes of a heifer sanctifies for the purification of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God. (Hebrews 9:11-14)

For Christ has entered, not into a sanctuary made with hands, a copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. Nor was it to offer Himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the Holy Place yearly with blood not his own; for then He

would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, He has appeared once for all at the end of the age to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And just as it is appointed for men to die once, and after that comes judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for Him. (Hebrews 9:24-28)

Consequently, when Christ came into the world, He said, "Sacrifices and offerings thou hast not desired, but a body hast thou prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings thou hast taken no pleasure. Then I said, 'Lo, I have come to do thy will, O God,' as it is written of me in the roll of the book." When He said above, "Thou hast neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings" (these are offered according to the law), then He added, "Lo, I have come to do thy will." He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest stands daily at His service, offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, He sat down at the right hand of God, then to wait until His enemies should be made a stool for His feet. For by a single offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified. (Hebrews 10:5-14)

In the Church of Christ, there is only one priesthood and one sacrifice. It is the priesthood of Jesus and the sacrifice of the Cross. The entire Church of Christ is a "royal priesthood." (1 Peter 2:9) The ordained clergy

of the Church exists to manifest and realize the unique priesthood of Jesus in the community which is the **“body of Christ.”** (1 Corinthians 12:27)

In the Kingdom of God, Christ, the great High Priest and Lamb will rule. He Who **“was dead and is alive again”** (Revelation 2:8) will govern all creation which will be the dwelling place of God.

And I saw no temple in the heavenly city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. By its light shall the nations walk; and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it, and its gates shall never be shut by day — and there shall be no night there; they shall bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations. But nothing unclean shall enter it, nor any one who practices abomination or falsehood, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s book of life. (Revelation 21:22-27)

Thus, the Old Testament temple, the priesthood and the sacrifices are all fulfilled in Christ Who is Himself the Temple and the Priest and the Sacrificed Lamb of the Kingdom of God which exists for His People whom He has made **“a kingdom, priests to His God and Father.”** (Revelation 1:16, 6:10; See Book II on *Worship*)

Prophecy

The Old Testament is filled with prophecy. **Prophecy** means the direct inspiration of God to speak His words to the world. There were many prophets in the Old Testament, not only those whose names are given to the prophetic books of the Bible, but many others, including Moses, Elijah, Samuel and Nathan.

In the Old Testament, many prophecies were made concerning the history and destiny of the people of Israel and of the whole human race. Usually the prophecies told what God would do in response to the wickedness and unfaithfulness of His People. The prophecies foretold the tragedies coming to Israel because of the sins of the People. They also foretold the ultimate mercy and forgiveness of God Who is faithful to His promises, Who will not be angry forever, but Who will restore the fortunes of His People and bring all nations to His everlasting Kingdom. (See above pages 22-25)

The ultimate act of God's mercy and compassion is His sending of His Son as the Messiah of Israel. Jesus, as we have seen, is the final King of God's Kingdom which reigns forever. He is the great high priest Who brings completion and perfection to man's priestly sacrifices to God. He is also the last and final Prophet Who ushers in the time when God creates a whole people of prophets, a whole assembly of those who are taught directly by God to know His Will and to speak His Words in the world.

Thus, in the Gospel of Saint John, it is recorded that the people recognized Jesus not merely as a prophet or one of the prophets, but as the final **Prophet** Whom God would send at the end of the ages.

When the people saw the sign which He had done (the feeding of the five thousand), they said, "This is indeed the Prophet Who is come into the world!" (John 6:14)

When they heard these words (about the living water), some of the people said, “This is really the Prophet.” Others said, “This is the Christ.” (John 7:40)

Saint Peter refers to the same appearance of Christ as the Prophet, in his preaching to the people outside the temple in Jerusalem.

Moses said, “The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet from your brethren as He raised me up. You shall listen to Him in whatever He tells you. And it shall be that every soul that does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people.” (Acts 3:22-23)

Jesus is “that prophet” whom Moses spoke about in the Old Law. (Deuteronomy 18:15) But even Moses and all the prophets of old did not realize that “that prophet” would be the divine Son and the uncreated Word of God in human flesh.

Jesus, as the final Prophet, is more than a prophet. He is radically different from the prophets of old. He is the “teacher come from God” (John 3:2), Who “speaks as one having authority” (Matthew 7:29, Mark 1:22), Who speaks not His own words, but the words of the Father Who sent Him. (John 14:24) But He is even more than this because He is Himself the divine Word of God in human flesh.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. (John 1:1-4)

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father. (John 1:14)

And from His fulness have we all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; the only Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He has made Him known. (John 1:16-18)

As the Word of God in human flesh, Jesus fulfills the prophecy of the great prophets of old who wrote that in the Messiah's time, all men would be taught directly by God.

**For a brief moment I forsook you,
but with great compassion I will gather you.
In overflowing wrath for a moment I hid my
face from you,
but with everlasting love I will have compassion
on you,
says the Lord, your Redeemer.
For the mountains may depart and the hills be
removed,
but my steadfast love shall not depart from you,
and my covenant of peace shall not be removed,
says the Lord, who has compassion on you.
All your sons shall be taught by the Lord,
And great shall be the prosperity of your sons.
In righteousness you shall be established;
you shall be far from oppression, for you shall
not fear;
and from terror, for it shall not come near you.
(Isaiah 54:7-8, 10, 13-14)**

But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each man teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the

Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. (Jeremiah 31:33-34)

As the Prophet and the incarnate Word of God, Jesus is the Way, the Truth, the Life and the Light of the world.

Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also; henceforth you know Him and have seen Him.” (John 14:6-7)

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” (John 8:12)

Jesus shares His gift of prophecy with all who belong to Him. He gives the Holy Spirit to all of His disciples that they too might know the Father and speak His words and be themselves “the light of the world.”

You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. (Matthew 5:14-16)

. . . and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear testimony before them and the Gentiles. When they deliver you up, do not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. (Matthew 10:18-20)

The full possibility for men to prophesy is given in the gift of the Holy Spirit Who came to Christ's disciples

on Pentecost and continues to come upon all who in the Church are baptized into Christ. This full outpouring of the Spirit of God on all flesh was itself prophesied by Joel in the Old Testament. Thus once again, the apostle Peter bears witness:

But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them, "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words. For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day: but this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel:

'And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; yea, and on my menservants and my maid-servants in those days

I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.'
(Acts 2:14-18)

The apostle Paul concurs with Peter as he insists that prophecy is the first of the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the Church of the Messiah.

Make love your aim, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy.
(1 Corinthians 14:1)

In the Kingdom of God, all prophecy will cease, for the final and perfect presence of God will be given. Then Christ, the Word of God, will be present in all of His divine glory, manifesting God the Father to the whole of creation.

Holiness

The God of the Old Testament was the Holy God. The word **holy** means separate, different, unlike anything else that exists.

The Holy God of the Old Testament revealed Himself to His chosen people who were able to behold His glory. The **glory** of the Lord was a special divine manifestation of the Person and Presence of God. It consisted in the vision of light, majesty and beauty and was accompanied by the voice of the Lord and His holy angels. It created in the persons who observed it overwhelming feelings of fear and fascination, as well as profound convictions of peace, well-being and joy.

In this way did Moses experience the Holy God in His divine glory on Horeb, the mountain of God, before the passover, and in the wilderness after the exodus from Egypt.

And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; and he looked, and lo, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. And Moses said, "I will turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt." When the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And He said, "Here am I." Then He said, "Do not come near; put off your shoes from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." And He said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. (Exodus 3:2-6)

Moses said, "I pray thee, show me thy glory." And He said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you, and will proclaim before you my name 'The Lord'; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom

I will show mercy. But,” He said, “you cannot see my face; for man shall not see me and live.” And the Lord said, “Behold, there is a place by me where you shall stand upon the rock; and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by; then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back; but my face shall not be seen.” (Exodus 33:18-23)

Other select persons of the Old Testament also experienced the presence of divine holiness and the glory of God. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Elijah, and Ezekiel had such experiences, as did Isaiah whose classic vision has become a standard part of the Church’s liturgical prayer.

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple. Above Him stood the seraphim; each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; and the whole earth is full of his glory.”

And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. And I said: “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!” Then flew one of the seraphim to me, having in his hand a burning coal which he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth, and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin forgiven.” And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Then I said, “Here am I! Send me.” (Isaiah 6:1-8)



The psalms also sing of the holiness of God and proclaim that all creation speaks of God's glory. (See Psalms 8, 19, 93, 104, 148, et. al.)

The main teaching of the Old Testament and the foundation of all of its life was that God's people should share in His holiness. This was the purpose of the entire Law of Moses in its commandments of morality and worship.

For I am the Lord your God; consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy. You shall not defile yourselves with any swarming thing that crawls upon the earth. For I am the Lord who brought you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God; you shall therefore be holy, for I am holy. (Leviticus 11:44-45)

The people were to be holy and to gain the wisdom and righteousness of God through their service and worship of Him. All of the so-called Wisdom writings of the Old Testament, and all of the teachings of the prophets and psalms are centered around this same fundamental fact: God's people should acquire and express the holiness, wisdom, glory and righteousness of God Himself. This, and nothing else is the meaning and purpose of man's life as created and guided by God.

The ultimate perfection of God's purpose for man is fulfilled in Christ. He alone is the fulfillment of the law and the prophets. He alone is the **"Holy One of God."** (Mark 1:24, Luke 1:35, 4:34) He alone is perfectly righteous and wholly without sin. Thus, Saint Peter speaks of Jesus to the people after the event of Pentecost.

The God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release

Him. But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. (Acts 3:13-15)

The apostle Paul concurs with the teaching of Peter by referring to Christ not merely as holy, righteous and wise, but as Himself the very holiness, righteousness and wisdom of God Himself in human flesh.

For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, whom God made our wisdom, our righteousness, and sanctification and redemption; therefore, as it is written, "Let him who boasts, boast of the Lord." (1 Corinthians 1:22-24, 30-31)

The glory of God is revealed in the person of Christ. This is the consistent witness of the apostles who beheld the "Kingdom of God come with power" on the mountain of the Transfiguration. (See Matthew 17:1-6, Mark 9:2-7, Luke 9:28-36, Book II on *Worship*)

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father. (John 1:14)

Now if the dispensation of death, carved in letters on stone, came with such splendor that the Israelites could not look at Moses' face because of its brightness, fading as this was, will not the dispensation of the Spirit be attended with greater splendor? For if there was splendor in the dispensation of condemnation, the dispensation

of righteousness must far exceed it in splendor. Indeed, in this case, what once had splendor has come to have no splendor at all, because of the splendor that surpasses it. For if what faded away came with splendor, what is permanent must have much more splendor. Since we have such a hope, we are very bold.

And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into His likeness from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

For it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. (2 Corinthians 3:7, 18, 4:6)

In and through Christ, by means of the Holy Spirit, all men can share in the glory of God and become participants in God's own holiness.

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us to His glory and excellence, by which He has granted to us His precious and very great promises, that through these you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of passion, and become partakers of the divine nature. (2 Peter 1:3-4)

The participation of men in the "nature of God" already begins in the Church of Christ, the final fruit of the salvation history of the Old Testament. In the Church, the Kingdom of God is present which is "**righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit,**" (Romans 14:17) In the Church of Christ already begins that perpetual praise of the Holy God which exists now in the heavens and will fill all creation when Christ comes in the glory of His Kingdom at the end of the ages.

**Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty,
who was and is to come! (Revelation 4:8b)**

And he said to me, "These words are trustworthy and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent His angel to show His servants what must soon take place. And behold, I am coming soon." Blessed is he who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book. (Revelation 22:6-7)

Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy. Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense, to repay every one for what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end. Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates. Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and fornicators and murderers and idolators, and every one who loves and practices falsehood. I Jesus have sent my angel to you with this testimony for the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright morning star. (Revelation 22:11-16)

He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! The grace of the Lord be with all the saints. Amen. (Revelation 22:20-21)



5

CHURCH HISTORY

First Century

The first century of the Christian era begins with the birth of Jesus Christ from the Virgin Mary in Bethlehem. Christ lived, died, rose again and ascended into heaven in the first century. This time also witnessed the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon Christ's disciples on the feast of Pentecost, the event which is often called the birthday of the Church.

In the first century, the apostles preached the Gospel of Christ. We do not know exactly where the apostles travelled, with the exception of Saint Paul whose missionary journeys are recorded in the book of **Acts**. According to Tradition, all of the apostles were universal preachers of the Gospel, who, with the exception of Saint John, were killed for their faith in Christ.

The gospels and epistles and all of the books which comprise the New Testament scriptures were written in the first century. Also at this time, the first Christian communities were established in the main cities of Asia Minor and Greece, and possibly in North Africa. The Church was also established in the capital city of Rome.

The Church

Contrary to what is sometimes thought, the Christian Church was first an urban phenomenon which only later spread to the rural areas. Also, it was composed mainly of people from what we would call today the "middle classes" of society. Thus, it is not true that Christianity gained its foothold in the world in uneducated and backward people who were looking for heavenly consolation in the face of oppressive and unbearable earthly conditions.

The main event of the Church of the first century was the admittance of gentiles into the Church who were not obliged to follow the ritual requirements of the Mosaic law. (See Acts 15, Galatians, Romans) Thus,

although the Christian Church entered Roman imperial society “under the veil” of Judaism, it was quickly separated from the Jewish faith as the People of God called from all the nations, those who were united in Christ the Messiah, Who was confessed as the Lord and Savior of all men and the whole world.

The requirements for entry into the Christian Church were **faith** in Jesus as Lord and Christ, **repentance** from sin, and **baptism** in Jesus’ name with the subsequent reception of the gift of the Holy Spirit. Those who fulfilled these requirements entered the Church which was founded in each place as a local community led by those called **bishops** or **presbyters** who received the laying-on-of-hands from the apostles. The apostles themselves were not local bishops of any particular Christian community in any place.

Each of the early Christian communities that we know about had its own unique character, and its own unique problems, as we see in the New Testament documents. (See above pages 34-65) Generally speaking, however, each church had great concern for the others and were all called to teach the same doctrines and to practice the same virtues, living the same life in Christ and the Holy Spirit.

And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teachings, and communion, to the breaking of the bread, and the prayers.

And all who believed were together and had all things in common; and they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any had need. (Acts 2:42, 44)

This description of the Church in Jerusalem can generally be applied to all of the early Christian communities.

Second Century

The Persecutions

The second century saw the further development of the Christian faith, and the greater persecution of the Church by the Roman imperial authorities, for whom Christianity was an “illegal religion.”

The Christians were criminals in the eyes of the Romans, not only religiously, but politically. They transgressed the laws of the state because they refused to honor the earthly emperor as king, lord, and god, which was required of them as members of imperial society. They prayed for the civil authorities and gave **“honor to whom honor is due” (Romans 13:1-7)**, but they refused to give the earthly king the glory and worship which was due to God, and to His Christ, alone. Thus the Roman law declared: **It is not lawful to be a Christian.**

One of the first witnesses to the Christians which we have in secular writing is found in the second century correspondence between Pliny the Younger and the Emperor Trajan, who ruled from 98-117. This correspondence reveals that Christianity was indeed proscribed, and that though Christians should not be sought out and were innocent of the gross charges against them, such as the sacrifice of children and the eating of human flesh (a misunderstanding of the eucharist which was conducted in “secret meetings”), the Christians nevertheless were to be executed if, when seized, they refused to give up their faith.

The persecution of the Christians in the second century was largely local, conducted according to the zeal of the local imperial authorities. Nevertheless, the persecutions were widespread and the Christians were generally hated even by the most tolerant and openminded of the Roman rulers. They were hated mostly for what was considered their stubbornness and intolerance due to their exclusive devotion to Christ as Lord. They were persecuted also for what was considered to be the political danger which they

brought to the unity of law and order in the imperial reign, particularly because of the increasing number of persons who were joining the Church.

Among the most famous of the Christian leaders and martyrs of the second century were the bishops **Ignatius of Antioch** (d.c. 110) and **Polycarp of Smyrna** (d. 156), and the philosopher **Justin** (d.c. 165). Each of these men who were killed for the faith left writings which, together with the **Didache**, the **Letter to Diognetus**, the letters of **Clement of Rome**, the **Letter of Barnabas**, the **Shepherd of Hermas** and the apologetic writings of such men as **Athenagoras of Athens**, **Melito of Sardis**, **Theophilus of Antioch** and the greatest of the second century theologians, **Irenaeus of Lyons**, all give a very vivid picture of the faith and life of the second century of the Church.

Defense of the Faith: Apologists

The most important developments in the second century, in addition to the persecutions and the growth of Church membership, were the defenses of the Christian faith against the false teachings, the so-called **apologies** against the Christian **heresies** as well as against Judaism and paganism. There was also the development of Church doctrine and the beginnings of post-apostolic theology; the establishment of the same basic church order in each local community led by its bishop, presbyters and deacons; the first foundations of the Christian liturgy and sacramental life completely separated from the Jewish synagogue; and the beginnings of the establishment of the canon of the holy scriptures of the New Testament Church.

At the end of the first century and at the beginning of the second century, many false writings about Christ were produced. These were the so-called **apocryphal** writings (not to be confused with the Old Testament apocrypha), the so-called **pseudoepigrapha** (See above

page 30). These false writings carried the names of the apostles and introduced into Christian circles many fanciful and legendary stories about the childhood of Christ, the life of the Virgin Mary and the activities of the apostles.

Together with the pseudoepigrapha, there also appeared the false teachings of **gnosticism**, the Christian heresy which transformed Christianity into a kind of spiritualistic, dualistic, intellectualistic philosophy. (See above page 44) The genuine Christians of the Orthodox faith had to contend with these false teachings. The result of their struggle was the production of the theology of the **apologists**, that is, those who defended the true faith and the original gospel of Christ. The result also was the teaching of **apostolic succession** in the Church, the doctrine that the genuine faith and life of Christianity is passed over from church to church, from generation to generation and from place to place, through the succession of the **Holy Tradition** of the Church in the consecration of bishops, whose teachings and practice is identical to each other and to that of the apostles of Jesus.

Another result was that the Church began firmly to establish exactly which writings belong to the holy scripture of the Church and which do not, their decision being based on the genuine apostolic testimony contained in the writings, and their use in the Church at the liturgical gatherings.

Church Order and Liturgy

In the writings of the second century apologists, martyrs, and saints, it is seen that each local Christian Church was headed by one **bishop** who presided over the Church which was administered by the **presbyters** or elders, and served by the **deacons**. Thus Saint Ignatius of Antioch writes in his letters:

I exhort you to strive to do all things in harmony with God: the bishop is to preside in the place of God, while the presbyters are to function as the council of the apostles, and the deacons, who are most dear to me, are entrusted with the ministry (i.e., good works) of Jesus Christ. (Letter to Magnesians 6, 1)

Take care, then, to partake of one Eucharist; for one is the Flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one the cup to unite us with His Blood, and one altar, just as there is one bishop assisted by the presbytery and the deacons, my fellow servants. (Letter to Philadelphians 4)

Where the bishop appears, there let the people be, just as where Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church. (Letter to Smyrneans 8, 2)

Saint Ignatius was the first to use the term **catholic** to describe the Church. It is an adjective of quality that tells how the Church is, namely, full, perfect, complete, whole, with nothing lacking in it of the fulness of the grace, truth and holiness of God.

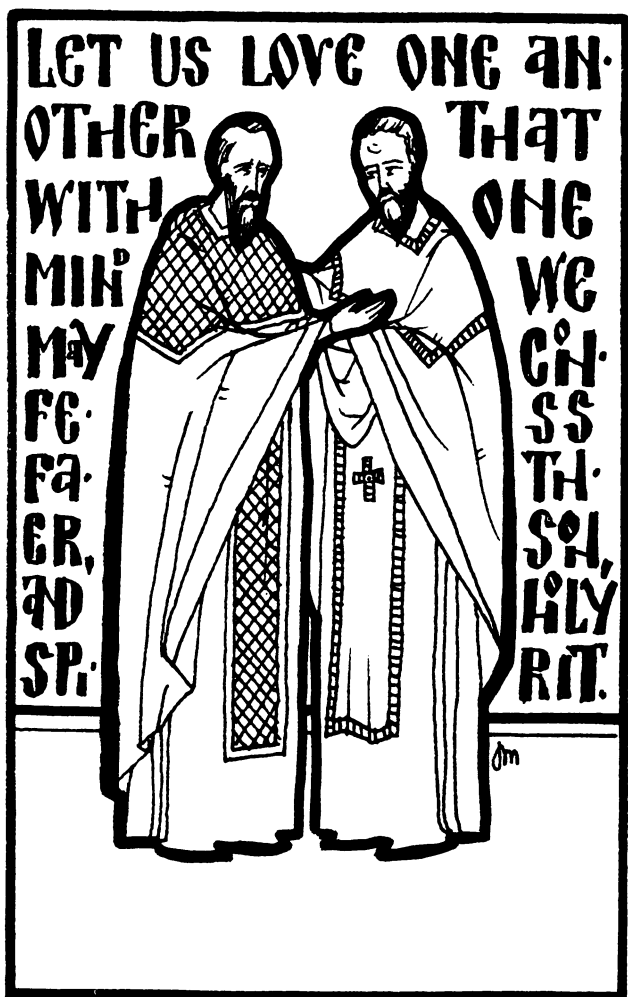
In the **Didache** and the **Apologies** of Saint Justin and Saint Irenaeus, there are also descriptions of the Christian sacraments.

Baptize as follows: after explaining all of these points, baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, in running water . . . (Didache 7, 1)

Let no one eat and drink of your Eucharist but those who are baptized in the name of the Lord . . . (Didache 9)

On the Lord's own Day, assemble in common to break bread and give thanks (i.e., the eucharist, which means thanksgiving); but first confess your sins so that your sacrifice may be pure.

However, no one quarrelling with his brother may join your assembly until they are reconciled; your sacrifice must not be defiled. (Didache 14)



Eucharist in the Apology of St. Justin

And on the day which is called Sunday, all who live in the cities or in the country gather together in one place and the memoirs of the apostles and the writings of the prophets are read as long as time permits. Then the reader concludes, and the president verbally instructs and exhorts us to the imitation of these excellent things, then we all rise together and offer up our prayers; and as I said before when we have ended our prayer, bread is brought and wine and water; and the president in like manner offers up prayers and thanksgivings according to his ability and the people give their assent by saying 'Amen'; and there is a distribution and a partaking by everyone of the Eucharist and to those who are absent a portion is brought by the deacons. And those who are well-to-do and willing give as they choose, each as he himself purposes; the collection is then deposited with the president who supports orphans, widows, those who are in want owing to sickness or any other cause, those who are in prison and strangers who are on a journey and in a word takes care of all who are in need. But Sunday is the day on which we hold our common assembly because it is the first day on which God, when He changed darkness and matter, made the world, and Jesus Christ our Savior on the same day rose from the dead.

(Apology 1, 67 of Saint Justin)

Third Century

The Christian Church lived in relative peace from the death of Marcus Aurelius (185) to the time of the Emperor Decius (249). When Decius came to power, he inaugurated a universal persecution of Christians throughout the whole empire. The persecutions by Decius were continued in force by Valerian (253-260). During this time, not only were the Christians forced to sacrifice to the imperial gods, but the clergy were sought out to be killed and all Christian properties were to be confiscated and destroyed. There was an all-out attempt to purge the Church of its leadership and to destroy it completely.

After Valerian, however, Gallienus, his son, stopped the policy of general persecution and the Christians once more lived in relative peace until the end of the century. During this period, there was an astounding growth in Church membership which perhaps reached up to ten percent of the population of the empire.

The Lapsed

The persecutions by Decius and Valerian, as well as the peaceful times which preceded and followed, brought a great interior crisis to the Christian Church in the third century. The question arose about what to do with those Christians who denied Christ under the threat of torture and execution, and who lapsed from Christian life into sin in times of peace. The maximalists in the Church urged that there could be no repentance for grave sins committed after baptism. They denied repentance to those who “lapsed” from the Christian life and opposed the bishops who agreed to allow the repentance and readmittance of sinners to Holy Communion after periods of penance. Thus, there were a number of schisms in the Church which caused some people to leave the Church for what they considered to be a more pure and rigorous form of Christianity. Among those who left was **Tertullian**

(d.c. 220), the great father of Latin theology in North Africa, and a prolific writer of Christian treatises of every kind. Tertullian joined the heretical movement of **Montanus** which began in the end of the second century and claimed to be the church of the “new prophecy” of the Holy Spirit which was more perfect than that of the “second testament” of Christ.

The great defender of the Catholic Church at this time was **Cyprian**, the bishop of Carthage (d. 258), who himself died a martyr’s death after opposing the so-called “pure” Church of Novatian in Rome which opposed the reintegration of the “lapsed” into the communion of the Church. Although a great reader of the theology of Tertullian, Cyprian defended the Catholic Church of the apostolic and episcopal succession against the spiritualistic “pure” churches of the self-styled maximalists. He insisted that the Church, as Christ, exists to save sinners and that “outside of the Church there is no salvation.” (Letter 73)

Does he who does not hold this unity of the Church think that he holds the faith? Does he who strives against and resists the Church trust that he is in the Church . . .? This unity we ought to hold and assert, especially those of us that are bishops who preside in the Church, that we may also prove the episcopacy to be one and undivided . . . The episcopate is one, each part of which is held wholly by each one. The Church also is one . . . (On the Unity of the Church 4, 5)

It is not possible to have God as Father who does not have the Church as mother. (On the Unity of the Church 6)

He is not a Christian who is not in the Church of Christ. (Letter 55)

Development of Theology

The third century also witnessed the emergence of the first formal school of Christian theology. It was located in Egypt, in Alexandria, founded by **Pantaenus**, developed by **Clement** (d.c. 215), and crowned by the outstanding theologian and scholar **Origen** (d. 253). Whereas Tertullian, the father of Latin theology, absolutely rejected any alliance between "Athens" and "Jerusalem," that is, between pagan philosophy and Christian revelation, the Alexandrians insisted that Greek philosophy was a sound preparation for the Christian Gospel and that the truths of the pagans could be and should be united to and fulfilled in the truths of the Christian faith. Thus, Origen wrote to his disciple Saint Gregory the Wonderworker:

I desire you to take from Greek philosophy those spheres of knowledge which are potentially an introduction to Christianity, and whatever information from geometry and astronomy may serve to explain the sacred books . . .

The work of Origen was phenomenal. He wrote numberless treatises on many themes. He did the first truly systematic and literary studies of the books of the Bible. His work laid the foundation for virtually all subsequent Greek theology in the Church. Much of the teaching of Origen was judged by the Church to be false, however, and, because of its persistence among his disciples, its author was formally condemned by the fifth ecumenical council in the year 553.

Among the theologians of the third century who must be mentioned with Tertullian, Cyprian, Clement and Origen are **Dionysius of Alexandria** (d. 265), **Hippolytus of Rome** (d. 235), **Gregory the Wonderworker in Cappadocia** (d.c. 270) and **Methodius of Olympus** (d. 311). All of these men developed Orthodox Christian theology, and particularly laid the foundation for the doctrine of the Holy Trinity which

would cause such controversy in the fourth century. **Paul of Samosata** and **Lucian of Antioch** also lived at the end of the third century and are known for their heretical teachings concerning the Trinitarian character of God.

Liturgical Development

Writings also exist from the third century which give an insight into the canonical and liturgical life of the Church of this time. These are the so-called **Teachings of the Apostles** from Syria, and the **Apostolic Tradition** of Hippolytus of Rome (d. 235) who wrote in Greek. The former gives regulations concerning the hierarchal offices and the sacramental practices in the Church of Syria, and describes the liturgical assembly. The latter also gives similar information, in a more lengthy and detailed way about the Church in Rome. It contains the text of the oldest fixed eucharistic prayer in Church history that we possess, as well as the form for the sacraments of baptism, chrismation and ordination.

Baptism and Chrismation in the Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus

**And when he who is to be baptized goes down to the water,
let him who baptizes lay hand on him saying thus:**

Dost thou believe in God the Father Almighty?

And he who is being baptized shall say: I believe.

**Let him forthwith baptize him once, having laid his hand
upon his head. And after this let him say:**

**Dost thou believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God,
Who was born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary,
Who was crucified in the days of Pontius Pilate,
And died and was buried**

**And He rose the third day living from the dead
And ascended into heaven,**

**And sat down at the right hand of the Father,
And will come to judge the living and the dead?**

And when he says: I believe, let him baptize the second time. And again let him say:

Dost thou believe in the Holy Spirit in the Holy Church and the resurrection of the flesh?

And he who is being baptized shall say: I believe.

And so let him baptize him the third time.

And afterwards when he comes up from the water, he shall be anointed by the presbyter with the Oil of Thanksgiving saying:

I anoint thee with holy oil in the Name of Jesus Christ.

And so each one drying himself with a towel, they shall now put on their clothes, and after this let them be together in the assembly (Church).

And the Bishop shall lay his hand upon them invoking and saying:

O Lord God, who didst count these Thy servants worthy of deserving the forgiveness of sins by the laver of regeneration, make them worthy to be filled with Thy Holy Spirit and send upon them Thy grace, that they may serve Thee according to Thy will; for to Thee is the glory, to the Father and to the Son with the Holy Ghost in the Holy Church, both now and ever and world without end. Amen.

After this, pouring the consecrated oil from his hand and laying his hand on his head, he shall say:

I anoint thee with holy oil in God the Father Almighty and Christ Jesus and the Holy Ghost.

And sealing him on the forehead, he shall give him the kiss of peace and say: The Lord be with you.

And he who has been sealed shall say: And with thy spirit.

And so he shall do to each one severally.

Thenceforward they shall pray together with all the people. But they shall not previously pray with the faithful before they have undergone all these things.

And after the prayers, let them give the kiss of peace.

Eucharist in the Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus

The Lord be with you.

And with thy spirit.

Lift up your hearts.

We have them in the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord.

That is proper and right.

We thank Thee God through Thy beloved servant Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent in the latter times to be our Savior and Redeemer and the messenger of Thy counsel, the Logos who went out from Thee, through whom Thou hast created all things, whom Thou wast pleased to send out from heaven into the womb of the Virgin, and in her body He became incarnate and was shown to be Thy Son born of the Holy Ghost and of the Virgin. In order to fulfil Thy will and to make ready for Thee a holy people, He spread out His hands when He suffered in order that He might free from sufferings those who have reached faith in Thee.

And when He gave Himself over to voluntary suffering, in order to destroy death, and to break the bonds of the devil, and to tread down hell, and to illuminate the righteous, and to set up the boundary stone, and to reveal the Resurrection, He took bread, gave thanks, and said: 'Take, eat, this is my body which is broken for you.' In the same manner also the cup, and said: 'This is my blood which is poured out for you. As often as you do this you keep my memory.'

When we remember His death and His resurrection in this way, we bring to Thee the bread and the cup, and give thanks to Thee, because Thou hast thought us worthy to stand before Thee and to serve Thee as priests.

And we beseech Thee that Thou wouldst send down Thy Holy Spirit on the sacrifice of the church. Unite them, and grant to all the saints who partake in the sacrifice, that they may be filled with the Holy Spirit, that they may be strengthened in faith in the truth, in order that we may praise and laud Thee through Thy servant, Jesus Christ, through whom praise and honor be to Thee in Thy holy church now and forever more.

Amen.

Fourth Century

Constantine

The fourth century began with the greatest persecution ever waged against the early Church, that of the emperor **Diocletian**. The longest list of early martyrs comes from this period (303-306).

After Diocletian's abdication, a power struggle developed among the imperial leaders. In 312, **Constantine** engaged in battle with his main contender for the western throne, **Maxentius**. Before the battle of the Milvian bridge near Rome, Constantine had a vision, perhaps in a dream. He saw the **Cross** or **Labarum** (**Chi Rho: XP**) of Christ with the words, "**In this sign, conquer.**" He placed the Christian symbol on his troop's tunics and weapons, and they won the battle. Constantine quickly moved to grant freedom to Christians to practice their faith in the empire, and also showed his own preference for Christianity by giving a number of privileges and advantages to the Church. Before Constantine died he built a city in the ancient site of **Byzantium** for his new imperial capital — a city named **Constantinople**, in his honor. Constantine himself was baptized only on his deathbed in 337. Together with his mother, **Helen**, who recovered the True Cross of Christ in Jerusalem, Constantine is recognized a saint of the Church. Christianity became the official religion of the empire in 380 by decree of the emperor **Theodosius**.

Inner Struggles

During Constantine's time, the Church recovered its property and was free from external persecution. Inner troubles immediately arose, however, to disturb the peace. First, there was the **Donatist Schism** in North Africa. The schism is so-called for **Donatus**, the principal theologian of a group that rejected the regularly elected bishop of Carthage on the grounds that one of the bishops who participated in his consecration had shown weakness in the time of persecution. Instead of forcing the Church to solve its

own problems, Constantine intervened in the controversy. First, he sided with the Donatists, then he sided with their opposers, using imperial power to enforce his decisions. The schism resulted in the ultimate destruction of the once glorious Church in North Africa, and established the precedent of imperial intervention in Church affairs.

The **Arian** controversy then arose. **Arius**, an Alexandrian priest, taught that the **Divine Logos**, the **Word of God** Who became man — Jesus Christ — is not the divine **Son of God**. He was merely a creature like everything else created out of nothing by God. According to Arius, God is not the uncreated Holy Trinity. God is the Father, the Creator, alone. God the Father created His **Logos** or **Word** or **Son** as the first and greatest of His creatures. This Logos, Who may be called divine only in a manner of speaking, is God's instrument for the salvation of the world, being born as the man Jesus. Thus Jesus Christ is not the uncreated, divine Son of God having exactly the same uncreated divinity as God the Father. He is a **creature**, as is the Holy Spirit. God is not the Holy Trinity.

The First Ecumenical Council

The controversy raised by the teaching of the Arians was brought to the decision of the whole Church at the Council which Constantine called in **Nicea** in 325. This council, known as the **First Ecumenical Council**, decreed that the **Logos**, **Word** and **Son of God** is uncreated and divine. He is **begotten** — that is, born or generated — from the Father, and **not made** or **created** by Him. He is of one essence with the Father (**homoousios**). He is **True God of True God**, the Word of God **by Whom all things were made**. It is this uncreated, only-begotten divine Son of God Who became man from the Virgin Mary as Jesus Christ the Messiah of Israel and the Savior of the world.

The Second Ecumenical Council

The decision of the Nicene Council was not universally accepted in the Church for a long time. The controversy raged for many decades. Numerous councils were held in different places which formulated various statements of faith. The Arian party gained imperial support and the defenders of the Nicene faith were greatly persecuted. The troubles persisted until 381 when, at a council in Constantinople, known now as the **Second Ecumenical Council**, the original decision of Nicea was reaffirmed and the divinity of the Holy Spirit was proclaimed. The combined statement of these two councils comprises the **Symbol of Faith**, the **Creed** of the Orthodox Church.

The Fathers of the Church

The great defenders of Nicene Orthodoxy were **Saint Athanasius the Great**, bishop of Alexandria (d. 373) and the **Cappadocian** bishops, **Saint Basil the Great** (d. 379), his brother **Saint Gregory of Nyssa** (d. 394), and their friend **Saint Gregory Nazianzen the Theologian** (d. 389). These fathers of the Church taught and explained the true Christian faith, suffering greatly for their defense of the central doctrine of Orthodox Christianity, that God is the **Most Holy Trinity**: three uncreated and divine persons of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, in one and the same uncreated, divine **nature**.

The Councils of the Church

The **Council of Nicea** also made a number of **canons** concerning the order and discipline of the Church. These canons confirmed the primacy of the Church of **Rome** in the West, **Alexandria** in Africa, and **Antioch** in the East (Canon 6), and the recognition of the dignity of the Church in **Jerusalem** (Canon 7). The council prohibited the practice of penitential kneeling at the Church's Sunday liturgy (Canon 20). The

The Creed

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten, begotten of the Father before all ages. Light of Light; true God of true God; begotten, not made; of one essence with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became man. And He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and was buried. And the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead; whose Kingdom shall have no end. And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets. In one Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins. I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Council of Constantinople also produced canons, one of which stated that “the bishop of Constantinople shall have the prerogative of honor after the bishop of Rome because Constantinople is the New Rome.” (Canon 3)

Liturgical Development

The fourth century witnessed a number of liturgical developments. During this time, the eucharistic prayers of the **divine liturgies**, named after **Saint Basil the Great** and **Saint John Chrysostom** (d. 407) were substantially formulated. The catechetical sermons of **Saint John Chrysostom** together with those of **Saint Cyril of Jerusalem** (d. 386) show that the sacraments of Baptism and Chrismation were being celebrated in the fourth century almost exactly as they are done in the Orthodox Church today. By this time, the **40 Day Lent** and the **Easter Feast** were well established. The **Nativity of Christ** was separated from the feast of **Epiphany** or **Theophany**, thus becoming a separate feast of the church to offset the pagan festival of the Sun which was celebrated on the twenty-fifth of December. (See Book II on *Worship*)

Monastic Life

The fourth century also saw the flourishing of monastic life in Egypt — led by **Saint Anthony the Great** (d. 356) — in Syria, and in the West. Among the monastic saints of this period were Paul of Thebes, Pachomius, Hilarion, Sabbas, Macarius of Egypt, Epiphanius of Cyprus, and Ephraim of Syria. Among the monastic saints in the West were Jerome, John Cassian, and Martin of Tours. The famous bishop saints of the fourth century were Saint Nicholas of Myra in Lycia, Saint Spyridon Trimunthys, and Saint Ambrose of Milan.

Fifth Century

Inner Struggles

At the beginning of the fifth century when Alexandria and Constantinople were feuding over their respective positions in the Church and in the empire, **Nestorius**, the bishop of Constantinople, made known his refusal to honor Mary, Christ's mother, with the traditional title of **Theotokos**. He claimed that the one born from Mary is merely the "man" in whom the eternal Logos of God came to dwell, but not the Logos Himself. Thus, Mary could not properly be called **Theotokos**, which means the **one who gave birth to God**.

Saint Cyril, the bishop of Alexandria (d. 444), forcefully rejected the teaching of Nestorius, claiming that it is proper to call Mary **Theotokos** since the one born from her, "according to the flesh," is none other than the divine Logos of God. The only-begotten Son of God was "begotten of the Father before all ages" coming down from Heaven for man's salvation, being born in the flesh, and becoming man from the Virgin. Thus, the Son of God and the Son of Mary is one and the same Son.

The Third Ecumenical Council

Nestorius and his followers refused to yield to Saint Cyril's appeals for repentance. Thus, in 431, in the city of **Ephesus**, a small group of bishops under Saint Cyril's direct control held a council to affirm the Alexandrian doctrine and to reject that of Nestorius. The decisions of this meeting were formally recognized in 433 by the Eastern bishops who had not been present. The Council of 431 subsequently became known as the **Third Ecumenical Council**.

The Robber Council

Again the decisions of this council were not immediately accepted. Controversy over the issue in question continued to rage. Saint Cyril and the majority of the Eastern bishops — who were inclined to oppose his

teaching because of their fear that it did not adequately express the genuine humanity of Jesus — were able to come to a common understanding. After his death, however, Cyril's fanatical followers again broke with the bishops of Constantinople and the East. In 449, a large number of bishops who considered themselves faithful to Saint Cyril's position, held another council in Ephesus. This council came to be known as the **latrocinium** or **robber council**. It formulated a doctrine about the person and nature of Christ which so stressed the Lord's divinity that His humanity all but completely disappeared. Thus, confusion and division continued to exist among Christians.

The Fourth Ecumenical Council

In 451, another council was called, this time in the city of **Chalcedon**, to solve the problem of the doctrine of Christ. This council, now recognized in the Church as the **Fourth Ecumenical Council**, succeeded in defending the teaching of Saint Cyril and the Ephesian Council of 431. It also satisfied the demands of the Eastern bishops that the genuine humanity of Jesus would be clearly confessed. In its definition, the Council of Chalcedon closely followed the teaching, formulated in a letter, of **Pope Saint Leo of Rome**.

The Chalcedonian definition states that Jesus Christ is indeed the Logos incarnate, the very Son of God "born of the Father before all ages." It affirms that the Virgin Mary is truly **Theotokos** since the one born from her "according to the flesh" in Bethlehem, is the uncreated, divine Son of God, one of the Holy Trinity. In His human birth, the Council declared, the Word of God took to Himself the whole of humanity, becoming a real man in every way, but without sin. Thus, according to the Chalcedonian definition, Jesus of Nazareth is **one person** or **hypostasis in two natures** — human and divine. He is fully human. He is fully divine. He is



perfect God and perfect man. As God, He is “of one essence” (homoousios) with God the Father and the Holy Spirit. As man, He is “of one essence” (homoousios) with all human beings.

The union of divinity and humanity in Christ is called the **hypostatic union**. This expression means that in the one, unique person of Christ, divinity and humanity are united in such a way that they are neither **mixed together** and **confused**, nor **separated** and **divided**. Christ is one person Who is both human and divine. The Son of God and the Son of Mary is one and the same person.

The Monophysites

The decision of the Council of Chalcedon was not accepted by the extreme disciples of Saint Cyril of Alexandria, nor by those who came to be associated with them. These Christians, called **monophysites**, rejected the Chalcedonian Council on the basis that the council spoke of **two natures**, thus rejecting the old formula of Saint Cyril which claimed that in His incarnation, Christ has but one nature. The supporters of the Chalcedonian decision claimed and still claim that though their words are different from those of the holy father, their doctrine is exactly the same and is simply expressed with greater precision. The disagreement was never settled, however, and although many attempts at reunion were made in the fifth and sixth centuries — and again in recent years — the dissenters from the Chalcedonian decision remain separated from the Orthodox Church.

Today, the so-called **monophysite** Christians are in the **Coptic Church of Egypt**, the **Ethiopian Church**, the **Syrian Jacobite Church**, the **Syrian Church of India**, and the **Armenian Church**. These churches are often called the **Lesser Eastern Churches** or the **Oriental Orthodox Churches**.

The Councils

The **Third** and **Fourth Ecumenical Councils** made a number of canons of a disciplinary and practical nature. The Council of Ephesus forbade the composition of a “different faith” from that of the first two councils (Canon 7). This canon has been used by the Orthodox in opposition to the addition of the word **filioque** to the Creed as it came to be used in the Western Churches. The Council of Chalcedon gave to Constantinople, the New Rome, “equal privileges with the old imperial Rome” because the new capital city was “honored with the emperor and the senate” (Canon 28).

The West

The fifth century witnessed the decline of the Christian empire in the West with the fall of Rome to the barbarians. The inception of the Western **dark ages** followed quickly after the death of a man whose voluminous and highly debated writings exercised the greatest single influence in Western Christianity, both Roman and Reformed: **Augustine, the bishop of Hippo** (d. 430).

Sixth Century

Emperor Justinian I and the Monophysites

The sixth century of Orthodox Church history in the East was dominated by the person and policies of the emperor **Justinian I** (527-65).

Justinian understood the relationship between the Church and the state to be one of unity and cooperation between the **priesthood** (which “concerns things divine”) and the **empire** (which “presides over mortals”). His goals were to regain the western part of his empire from the barbarian invaders, and to win back the monophysites to the Orthodox faith of the Council of Chalcedon. He hoped to reunite completely the one Church and empire. Justinian accomplished his first goal by the efforts of his armies which were led by the general **Belisarius**. He failed in his second goal, although his attempts were bold and persistent.

Justinian’s main attempt to win back the monophysites to the Orthodox Church was through the official condemnation of three theologians whom the supporters of the Council of Chalcedon generally favored, but whom the opponents of Chalcedon despised. By imperial decree in 544 and by decision of a council held in 553 (traditionally referred to as the **Second Council of Constantinople** and the **Fifth Ecumenical Council**) Justinian formally condemned the so-called **Three Chapters**. These were the objectionable writings of **Theodoret of Cyr** and **Ibas of Edessa**, and the writings and the person of **Theodore of Mopsuestia**.

The condemnation of the **Three Chapters** displeased the strict supporters of the Chalcedonian Council. They did not agree with the wrong and ambiguous doctrines of these three theologians, but they did not see any reason for their condemnation. Justinian’s efforts to appease the monophysite opponents of Chalcedonian Orthodoxy through the condemnation of the **Three Chapters** was ultimately fruitless. The measure did not convince the dissenters to reunite with the Church or the Empire.

The Fifth Ecumenical Council

In addition to rejecting the unorthodox and ambiguous teachings of the **Three Chapters**, the **Fifth Ecumenical Council** carefully clarified the Orthodox doctrine of the **hypostatic union** of divinity and humanity in Christ. In a long series of statements, the Council affirmed, without ambiguity, the traditional Orthodox faith that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is “one of the Holy Trinity,” one and the same divine person (hypostasis) Who has united personally (hypostatically) in Himself the two natures of God and man, without fusing them together and without allowing their separation in any way.

The Fifth Council also officially condemned the teachings of **Origen** (d. 254) and his sixth-century disciples who taught and practiced a “**spiritualistic**” version of Christianity which held many unorthodox doctrines. They taught that Christ was the only created spirit who did not become material through sin; that men’s souls were pre-existent spirits; and that all creation will ultimately be saved through its spiritualization by God in Christ the Savior.

Emperor Justinian I and Reform

Justinian’s reign also saw a concerted attack against the remnants of Hellenistic paganism in the empire. The University of Athens was closed in 529 and exclusively Christian learning and culture was promoted.

Justinian built many Church buildings in the imperial city and throughout the empire, particularly in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and on Mount Sinai in Egypt. His greatest creation was the temple dedicated to **Christ the Wisdom of God** in Constantinople — the magnificent Church of the **Hagia Sophia**. Iconography, engraving and mosaic work flourished during this time. The basilicas of Ravenna, the seat of the imperial authority in the West during the barbarian conquests, were built.

Liturgical Development

Many liturgical hymns were written, including the **Christmas Kontakion** and songs by **Saint Romanos the Hymnographer** (d. 510). The emperor, Justinian, himself wrote the hymn **Only-begotten Son**, which is still sung at the **synaxis** of the divine liturgies in the Orthodox Church.

The sixth century witnessed a certain establishment and stabilization of liturgical worship throughout the Eastern Christian world, particularly because the liturgical practices of the imperial city of Constantinople were being accepted by other cities throughout the empire. The Church of Constantinople began to use certain liturgical feasts already in use in the Palestinian centers of Church life. These feasts were the **Nativity** and the **Dormition of the Theotokos** and the **Presentation of Christ to the Temple**. It is likely that the feast of the **Transfiguration** was celebrated in Constantinople by this time.

In addition to the festal celebrations of the capital city which spread throughout the empire, such elements as the formal liturgical **entrances**, and the chanting of the **Trisagion** and the **Creed** in the divine liturgy of the Church were added.

The convergence of several factors caused numerous changes in the Church's liturgical ritual and piety. These factors were the rise of the Constantinopolitan Church as the model for other churches; the development of the imperial **churchly ritual**; the appearance of the **mystical theology** of the writings under the name of **Dionysius the Areopagite**; and the attempts of the imperial powers to pacify the monophysites.

At this time the practices of the Church of Constantinople were combined with the original Jewish-Christian worship of the early Church, the **rule of prayer** which had developed in the Christian monasteries, and the liturgical practices of the Church in

Jerusalem, to form the first great synthesis of liturgical worship in Orthodox history.

Five Patriarchates

In the sixth century, Constantinople, at least in the minds of Eastern Christians, was firmly established as the primary **see** in the Christian **pentarchy**, which Justinian called the “five senses of the universe”: **Constantinople, Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem**. The title **ecumenical** was given to all the chief offices in the imperial city. When **John the Faster** (528-95), the bishop of Constantinople, assumed the title of **ecumenical patriarchate**, the designation was forcefully opposed by **Pope Saint Gregory the Great**, the bishop of Rome (590-604), as unbecoming of a Christian pastor. It is this same **Saint Gregory**, who was a theologian and pastor of saintly reputation, whose name is traditionally connected with the **Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts** which the Orthodox celebrate on the weekdays of Great Lent (See Book II on *Worship*)

The West

In addition to Saint Gregory, **Saint Benedict of Nursia** (c. 480-542) and his monastic disciples were to have great influence on the subsequent history of the Western Church. Among the saints of this century, mention must be made of **Saint Columba** and **Saint Augustine of Canterbury**, the contemporaries of Saint Gregory. These men were the most famous of the missionaries in Western Europe, England, and Ireland who labored among the barbarian tribes.

In Spain, in the sixth or seventh century, the word **filioque** was added to the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed. This action, which was done to stress the divinity of Christ to the invading barbarians — who were Arians — was destined to have grave consequences in later Church history.

Seventh Century

Dionysius the Areopagite

The theological writings which appeared in the sixth century under the name of **Dionysius the Areopagite** were generally accepted by both the defenders of and the dissenters from the doctrines of the fourth and fifth ecumenical councils. These writings had great influence on the liturgical piety of the Church through their symbolical explanations of the rituals of worship. They presented a **mystical** theology which stressed the absolute incomprehensibility of God, and His absolute “otherness” from everything else which exists in His creation. They did, however, contain a doctrine concerning Christ which caused grave difficulties in the seventh century.

The Dionysian writings contained the teaching that Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God, has **one theandric will and action** which completely combined the two distinct activities and operations of His divine and human natures. This doctrine was called **monothelism** (which means that Christ had only one divine-human will), or **monenergism** (which means that Christ had only one divine-human action, operation or energy). It was eagerly accepted by those who thought that this doctrinal formulation would finally solve the problem of the division of the monophysites, and reunite them to the Church.

The monophysites did, in fact, deeply appreciate the teachings of the Pseudo-Dionysian writings. The anonymous author of these works was himself most likely a monophysite. In spite of this, the expected reunion of those who were divided from the Church since the middle of the fifth century did not come. The reason why it did not come was the fierce opposition to the doctrine of the **one theandric will and action** in Christ by **Saint Maximus the Confessor** (d. 662) and **Pope Saint Martin of Rome** (d. 655).

Saint Maximus the Confessor and Saint Martin

Both these men, together with their staunch supporters, insisted that Jesus Christ must have two distinct and separate wills and actions, just as He has two distinct and separate natures in one person. The Holy Fathers insisted there is **one** Son of God Who is **one** Son of Mary, but this **one** Son wills and acts distinctly as God and as man.

Christ has the fullness of the **divine** will, energy, action, operation, and power which is the same as that of the Father and the Holy Spirit. Christ also has the fullness of the **human** will, energy, action, operation, and power which is the same as that of every other human being. Salvation consists in the fact that Jesus Christ, being a true human, freely and voluntarily submitted his human will (which is exactly the same human will that all men have) to His divine will (which is the will of God). Thus the divine Son of God became a real man with a real **human will** so that as a real man He could “fulfill all righteousness” in perfect, voluntary obedience to His Father. It is through His genuinely **human action** that Jesus Christ frees all men from sin and death as the New and Final Adam. (See Book I on *Doctrine*)

Saint Maximus and Saint Martin suffered greatly for opposing the monothelite position. They were imprisoned, tortured, and mutilated by the imperial powers who wanted badly to use monothelitism as a way to reunion with the monophysites.

The Sixth Ecumenical Council

Ultimately, however, the doctrine of these saints prevailed. The **Third Council of Constantinople**, known as the **Sixth Ecumenical Council**, held in 680-681, officially verified their teaching and formally condemned both **Patriarch Sergius of Constantinople** and **Pope Honorius of Rome**, together with all who defended the false doctrine about Jesus that deprived Him of His genuine humanity.

Theological Writings

Saint Maximus the Confessor wrote also on spiritual and ascetical themes. His contemporary in Egypt, **Saint John Climacus** (d. 649), abbot of the monastery of Saint Catherine on Mount Sinai, wrote the classical work on the spiritual life, **The Ladder of Divine Ascent**. **Saint Andrew of Crete** wrote his penitential canon in the seventh century which is still read in the Orthodox Church during Great Lent.

The Birth of Islam

The seventh century also witnessed the birth of **Islam** by the prophet **Mohammed**, who initiated the Moslem era by his flight to Mecca in 622. The followers of this new religion lost no time in attacking the Christian empire, which at the time was greatly weakened after a long war with the **Persians**. It was during the Persian War that the emperor **Heraclius** recovered the true Cross from the armies who seized it, and brought it to Constantinople. This action marked the celebration of the **Exaltation of the Cross** throughout the Christian Empire. Until the thirties of the seventh century, a special day in September for the veneration of the Cross was observed only in Jerusalem. (See Book II on *Worship*)

The Quinisext Council or The Council of Trullo

At the end of the seventh century, most likely in 692, a council was held in Constantinople, in the domed room, or **Trullo**, of the imperial palace. It made 102 canonical regulations. These canons are also called the canons of the **Quinisext** council because they are understood as continuing the work of the fifth and sixth ecumenical councils which had issued no canonical decrees.

Many of the canons try to update formal church law by coordinating it with the already existing civil legisla-

tion of Justinian. Others put early church practice and disciplinary norms in more precise terms. For example, these canons formalized the rule according to which married men may be ordained to the diaconate and the presbyterate (priesthood) retaining their wives, but that already ordained deacons and priests may not marry. The council reinforced the law dating from Justinian's time that only celibates may serve in the office of the bishop. This council also set the ages for ordination, and reaffirmed the traditional churchly discipline regarding the clergy, such as their strict exclusion from direct participation in the political, military, and economic affairs of this world.

Liturgical Development

The canons of the Trullan Council clearly decreed that a 40 day period of fasting should precede Easter, on the week days of which the eucharistic divine liturgy should not be celebrated, but that the liturgy of the presanctified gifts be served (Canon 52). It called for Christians to honor Christ's resurrection by refraining from penitential kneeling on Sundays (Canon 90). This council forbade laymen from entering the sanctuary of the Church building, and forbid the sacramental marriage of Orthodox Christians with non-Orthodox (Canons 69, 72). It enjoined those who sing in Church to refrain from "undisciplined vociferations" and from using "any melodies which are incongruous and unsuitable for the Church" (Canon 75). It called for the excommunication of people, who for no good reason, miss the liturgy "three consecutive Sundays" (Canon 80). Finally, it called for the "penalty of murder" for those who "give drugs for procuring abortion and those who take them to kill the fetus" (Canon 91).

Eighth Century

The Icon Debate

In the eighth century the Isaurian rulers Leo III (717-741) and Constantine V (741-775) in the East attempted to subject the Church to their rule. In order to gain control of the Church these two emperors viciously attacked the zealous Christians, especially the monks, who defended the integrity of the Church. The attack took the form of a fierce persecution against those who venerated the icons. The subject of the attack was well placed because there really existed an exaggerated veneration of icons among the pious people which truly bordered on idolatry and paganism.

A council held in 753 formally condemned the veneration of icons by Christians. It called for the removal of all images from the churches, public buildings, and homes of the people. This council was not only a political move by the rulers to gain authority over the Church, but it showed a reasoned and well skilled argumentation against icon veneration. The basis of the position of the council was taken primarily from the biblical teaching that God is invisible, therefore visible, graven images are not to be made and adored by true believers. It is possible that this argumentation was inspired by close contact with the Moslems who were fanatically strict on these very points.

The bishops of the Church were under strong imperial pressure to condemn officially the veneration of icons. When they did, a vicious persecution of those who continued to keep and to venerate the holy images immediately followed. The time between 762 and 775 is known as the “decade of blood” since hundreds of Christians, mostly monks, were imprisoned, tortured, and even killed for harboring and honoring icons.

The Seventh Ecumenical Council

In 787, during the reign of the Empress Irene (780-802), who favored icon veneration, a council was held in

Nicea which defined the legitimate and proper use of icons in the Church. This council, now known as the **Seventh Ecumenical Council**, followed the theology of **Saint John of Damascus** (d. 749). The decision of the council affirmed that icons may be made and honored but not worshiped.

The bishops of the council reasoned that the very essence of the Christian faith is the incarnation of the Son and Word of God in human flesh. God indeed is invisible. But in Jesus Christ the invisible God has become visible. The one who sees Jesus sees the invisible Father. (John 14:8) When icon-painting and icon-veneration in the Church are denied, the true humanity of Jesus is denied. As well, it is denied that in and through Christ, the Holy Spirit has been given to men so that they may become holy, truly fulfilling themselves as created “**in the image and likeness of God.**” (Genesis 1:26)

Thus, it was the council’s decision that the rejection of the holy images was the rejection of the fact of salvation by God in Christ and the Holy Spirit.

God the Father and the Holy Spirit cannot and must not be depicted. Christ, the Theotokos, and the saints can be depicted in iconographic form because they show the reality of man’s salvation by God. They show the true transfiguration and sanctification of man — and the whole of creation — by Christ and the Holy Spirit. The images may be venerated in the Church since “honor rendered to the image ascends to its **prototype**, and he who venerates an icon adores the person (hypostasis) of the one portrayed.” (Seventh Ecumenical Council)

After the council of 787 the attack against the icons continued. It finally ended in 843 when the icons were returned to the Churches where they remain today.

Liturgical Development

Saint John of Damascus was also responsible for liturgical development in the eighth century. He was a high-ranking minister of the Moslem Caliph who became a monk in the St. Sabbas monastery in Jerusalem. He wrote many liturgical hymns still sung in the Church such as the **Canon of Easter Matins**, and certain hymns sung at the Orthodox **funeral** service. He is considered to be the original composer of the **Octoechos**, which is the collection of hymns sung in the Church using eight different melodies, one each week on a rotating basis throughout the year. (See Book II on *Worship*) Saint John is the author of the first systematic treatise of Orthodox Christian doctrine called the **Complete Exposition of the Orthodox Faith**. This treatise can be found in part three of the work, **The Fount of Knowledge**.

The feast of the **Entrance of the Theotokos to the Temple** was introduced in Constantinople. According to St. Andrew of Crete, the feast was already being celebrated in Jerusalem as early as the sixth century. Thus, by the eighth century, it had found its place in the universal calendar of the Orthodox Church.

The West

In the West, in the eighth century, the barbarian tribes continued to be converted to Christianity. The greatest missionary at this time was St. Boniface (d. 754). Also in this century the bishops of Rome became for the first time secular rulers who governed properties in Italy, and entered into close relation with the newly-emerging Carolingian rulers. It was these barbarian rulers of the Carolingian House, particularly **Charlemagne**, who were to restore the empire in the West with the cooperation of the bishops of Rome. In order to do so, however, they had to attack the legitimacy of the empire in the East. They made their attack by accusing the East of idolatry because of icon veneration, and by accusing the East of dropping the words "and the Son"

(**filioque**) from the Nicene Creed. These accusations were contained in the **Caroline Books** given by Charlemagne to the pope of Rome in 792.



Ninth Century

End of the Icon Debate

Following the council of 787 at which the veneration of the holy icons was formally defended in the Church, new imperial rulers emerged who once again attacked both the veneration and the venerators of the holy images. When the Empress Irene died in 802, Leo the Armenian became the emperor. In 815 he ordered the icons in the churches to be placed beyond the reach of the faithful so that they could not be honored and kissed. On Palm Sunday in 815, **Saint Theodore**, the abbot of the great **Studios Monastery** in Constantinople, led a public procession with the holy icons. This procession was met by imperial attacks, tortures, and murders. Only in 843, with the ascendancy of the **Empress Theodora**, under the leadership of the **Patriarch Methodius**, were the holy icons returned once and for all to the Church. This formal return of the icons on the **First Sunday of Lent** in that year marked the beginning of the annual celebration of the **Feast of the Triumph of Orthodoxy** still observed today.

Cyril and Methodius: The Mission to the Slavs

In the middle of the ninth century the patriarch of Constantinople, **Saint Photius**, sent missionaries into Moravia to bring the Christian faith to the Slavic people. The Greek brothers, **Constantine** and **Methodius**, arrived in Moravia in 863. Constantine had already created the Slavic alphabet — now called the **Old Slavonic** or **Old Bulgarian** — which the brothers used to translate church books into the Slavic language. Their work consisted of teaching the alphabet, introducing the liturgical books and ritual, and training men for the priesthood.

The mission of Constantine and Methodius created hostilities with the Frankish missionaries from the Latin Church who had come to Moravia earlier. They believed that the official languages of the Church should be Hebrew, Latin, and Greek only. They did not believe that the Slavic language should be used in

the Church services. Thus Constantine and Methodius went to Rome in 869 to justify their work, particularly the use of the native language in the liturgy. Pope Hadrian II blessed the Greek missionaries for their work.

Constantine died in 869. Just before his death he became a monk, taking the name of **Cyril** by which he is known as a saint of the Church, and from which his alphabet received the name **Cyrillic**.

Methodius was consecrated as the archbishop of Pannonia. When he returned to his missionary work, he was arrested by the Frankish-Germanic clergy with the help of Louis the German. In 873 when Pope John discovered what had happened to Methodius, he demanded his release. But after Methodius' death in 885, his work was all but destroyed by the Frankish-Germanic powers. Most of his disciples were arrested, exiled, or sold into slavery. Some escaped into Bulgaria where **Saints Clement** and **Naum** did great missionary work among the people there. The Bulgarians by this time were receiving the Christian faith. They had been attached to the Church of Constantinople in 870. The work of **Saints Cyril** and **Methodius**, the "evangelizers of the Slavs," continued on from Bulgaria through the Serbian lands, and ultimately into Kiev and Northern Russia in subsequent centuries.

The Filioque Issue

The clash between the East and the West was not only over the mission to the Slavs. It had deeper roots in the role which the new Frankish and Germanic rulers were to play in Western Europe and in the Western Church.

In the year 800, on Christmas Day, **Charlemagne** was crowned emperor by the Pope of Rome. In 792 this new ruler had already sent his **Caroline Books** (*Libri Carolini*) to Pope Hadrian I. The reason for Char-

lemagne's attack against the Eastern Church was that this was the only way in which he could discredit the Eastern emperor so that he himself could be recognized as the sole ruler in Christendom. In his vision of the new **Holy Roman Empire** Charlemagne wanted to include all of the East together with all of the West.

In 808 Pope Leo III of Rome reacted against the charges of Charlemagne against the East. He had the creed without the filioque enshrined in silver tablets on the doors of St. Peter's.

The Papacy

Although Charlemagne's attempts to establish rule over all Christendom did not succeed, the Roman popes began to extend their churchly governance over the whole of the West. Strong popes like **Nicholas I** (858-867) exerted their authority over all the bishops in the West, curbing the influence of lay authorities and the decentralization favored by the local metropolitans. In this process they were aided by the **False Decretals**, documents which claimed to be letters of the very earliest popes but which, in fact, were ninth-century Frankish forgeries. In addition, the so-called **Donation of Constantine** made its influence known. This claimed that the Emperor Constantine, in the fourth century, had given certain powers and privileges to the Roman bishops, including secular control over the territories around Rome which later came to be called the **papal states**.

Photius, Patriarch of Constantinople

From 861-886 the first open clash took place between the Eastern and Western Churches. In Constantinople there were two parties struggling for power in both ecclesiastical and civil affairs, the so-called zealots or conservatives and the moderates. To provide a leader capable of restoring peace to the Church, a layman named **Photius** was elevated to the patriarchal office.

The extremists of the so-called conservative party were not satisfied. They appealed to Rome, using the good name of the former patriarch **Ignatius** — who had peaceably retired for the good of the Church — against Photius and the imperial government which confirmed his election. Pope Nicholas seized the opportunity of this extremist appeal to interfere in the affairs of the Constantinopolitan Church, calling a council in that city in 861 to settle the dispute. When the papal legates came to the council they saw that Photius was the rightful patriarch, and all was happily settled. However, when the legates returned to Rome, Pope Nicholas rejected their decision, and held another council, this time in Rome in 863, at which he proclaimed Ignatius as the bishop of Constantinople, thus deposing Photius. His actions were ignored.

In 866 and 867 the Bulgarian Church was fluctuating between Constantinople and Rome. In 867 Photius and a council of five hundred bishops in Constantinople condemned Pope Nicholas for interfering in the affairs of the Bulgarian Church. But in this same year there was another political shift in Constantinople. Basil I became emperor by assassinating his predecessor and former patron, and for political reasons Ignatius was reinstated as patriarch in place of Photius. In 869 Pope Hadrian II, the successor of Nicholas, excommunicated Photius again for his role in the Bulgarian affair. But in 877 the situation changed. Photius, who was not in disfavor with the new emperor, again became patriarch when the venerable Ignatius died.

In 879 a huge council took place in Constantinople, once again with papal legates in attendance. At this council, presided over by Photius, the traditional privileges of the Pope of Rome in the East were clarified by Photius and accepted by John VIII who was the new pope. The councils of 863 and 869 which

condemned Photius were declared null and void. The council of 787 was accepted as the seventh ecumenical council. The creed was affirmed without the filioque.

Photius was officially canonized a saint by the Orthodox Church in the tenth century. He was a man of many talents. He was a great theologian who wrote extensively, particularly on the question of the filioque by defending the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father alone. He was a compiler of classical and patristic writings. He sponsored the mission to the Slavs. He defended the authentic Church Tradition in confrontation with the exaggerated claims of Nicholas, while ultimately preserving unity with the Roman Church and Pope John VIII. He was an excellent diplomat in political affairs, with personal humility and wisdom which earned him the respect of good-willed persons of all parties in East and West. Saint Photius was one of the truly great bishops in Christian Church history.

Liturgical Developments

In the ninth century another great saint, **Saint Theodore of Studios** was responsible for liturgical development. Saint Theodore was the abbot of the Studios monastery in Constantinople who had, during his lifetime, about a hundred thousand monks in his charge. He is known for his defense of the holy icons, and for his role in the development of Orthodox liturgical worship. The liturgical **typikon**, the order of public worship in the Studios monastery, has become the normative order of worship for the entire Orthodox Church since the ninth century. The service books for Great Lent and Easter, the **Lenten Triodion** and the **Flower Triodion** (also called the **Pentecostarion**) are almost totally the work of the Studite monks, among the most famous of whom is **Saint Joseph the Hymnographer**.

Also dating from the ninth century is a copy of the **Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom** which has the liturgy of the faithful in virtually the exact same form in which it is done in the Orthodox Church today.

Law Code

At the end of the ninth century, **Emperor Basil I** initiated a new codification of the civil law. One of the resulting works was the **Epanagoge**. It reaffirmed the system of the “symphony” or unity between the church and state.

The West

Generally speaking, the ninth century was one of the most significant centuries in Church history. It was a period of renaissance in the East, while in the West it was one of increasing centralization around the Roman papacy. The only theologian of note in the West at this time was **John Scot Erigena** (d. 877), who brought the strong influence of the Eastern theology of Dionysios and St. Maximus into the Western Church.

Tenth Century

Cultural Renaissance

In the East, in the tenth century, there was a general continuation of the cultural renaissance of the ninth century. The writings of the Church fathers were collected. For the first time, **Saint Simeon Metaphrastes** codified the Church's **Lives of the Saints**. There was also a renewed interest in pagan antiquity led by such men as **Michael Psellus** and **John Italos** whose extreme "hellenization" led to conflicts with the Church.

In 960 **Saint Athanasius of Mount Athos** (d. 1000) founded the **Great Lavra** and thus opened the way to the development of the great monastic republic on the Holy Mountain. **Saint Simeon the New Theologian** (d. 1022) wrote his influential treatises about the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in Christians.

Church and State

The tenth century also saw the increasing interpenetration of ecclesiastical and civil aspects of Byzantine Society. The Church received greater control over such matters as marriage and the family. For example, a church blessing — regulated by Orthodox canon law — in time comes to be required if a marriage is to be acknowledged as valid by the civil authorities. At the same time, the Church had to become more concerned with establishing "minimum requirements" than it had been earlier. This can be seen in the so-called "fourth marriage dispute," which was touched off in 925 as the patriarch of Constantinople **Nicholas Mystikos** refused to permit Emperor Leo VI to enter into a fourth marriage, thus bringing into Orthodox canon law the strict prohibition of a fourth marriage in the Church to anyone, under any circumstances. The Church's theology of marriage upholds perpetual monogamy as its standard: a union of one man and one woman which is not destroyed even by death. Remarriage, even of widows and widowers, does not conform to this standard, even though it may

be accepted as a concession to human weakness. With the “fourth marriage dispute,” however, attention comes to focus on the minimum — hence the misleading notion that the Orthodox Church “allows” three marriages to its faithful.

Bulgaria

Tsar **Boris of Bulgaria**, who was baptized in 869 with Emperor Michael III of Constantinople as his godfather, finally turned definitively from Rome to Constantinople, and by the tenth century his church was firmly established within the Eastern Byzantine liturgy. Particularly under his son, **Tsar Simeon**, Bulgaria was a powerful state and a Byzantino-Bulgarian culture flourished. However, by the end of the century, the heresy of the **Bogomils** — a dualistic, spiritualistic sect of Manichaean tradition — was spreading.

Vladimir of Kiev

In 988, the subjects of the Kievan principality were baptized in the Dnieper River under the leadership of the **Great Prince Vladimir**, thus beginning the history of the Orthodox Church in the Ukraine and in Russia. Vladimir received the Christian faith from Constantinople, being baptized there with the emperor Basil as his godfather. There is a legend that the legates of Vladimir could not find a more beautiful faith than that of the Byzantines. It is also well known that the Kievan prince found it politically and economically expedient to marry the Byzantine princess Anna, and to align his principality with the Constantinopolitan empire.

After his baptism Vladimir experienced a genuine spiritual conversion. He did much to establish Christian principles in his realm, and to enlighten his subjects with the Orthodox faith. For his personal and official acts of righteousness as a Christian prince of his

time, Vladimir has been canonized a saint of the Church. His grandmother, the great princess Olga, who was converted before him and who apparently influenced his decisions and actions, has also been canonized a saint.

Liturgical Development

Liturgically the feast of the **Protection of the Virgin Mary** comes from the tenth century. **Saint Andrew the Fool for Christ** (d. 956) saw a vision of the Theotokos interceding before God and protecting the praying people of Constantinople with her veil (omophorion-protection) during the time of an attack from the pagan Slavs. Ironically the feast of the **Protection of the Theotokos**, which has been detached from its historical roots and is now celebrated primarily as the feast of the presence of Mary in the midst of the Church, is kept as a popular feast almost solely by the churches of Slavic tradition.

The West

In the later ninth century the West entered one of the darkest periods in its history. New waves of invasions destroyed the relative security of the empire created by Charlemagne. The Church suffered from the domination of lay lords. Communication with the East was virtually cut off. There was the beginning of a reform movement, however, flowing from the **Monastery of Cluny** in France.

Eleventh Century

The Great Schism

In the mid-eleventh century a major controversy arose between Constantinople and Rome. The immediate cause of the conflict at this time was the Pope's suppression of Greek liturgical practices in South Italy, and the suppression of Latin practices in the East by the patriarch of Constantinople. In 1053 the Pope sent legates to Constantinople in an attempt to restore communion between the churches. **Michael Cerularius**, the patriarch of Constantinople, refused to give the papal legates a hearing because he thought they were politically motivated.

On July 16, 1054, **Cardinal Humbert**, the head of the papal delegation, was tired of waiting. He was irritated by the lack of respect shown to the Roman ambassadors, so he placed a document of **anathema** and excommunication (applying only to the "patriarch Michael Cerularius and those in sympathy with him") on the altar table of the Holy Wisdom cathedral. At the same time, the cardinal was very careful to praise Constantinople as a "most orthodox city."

The official reasons for Humbert's anathema and excommunication of Cerularius were the removal of the filioque from the Creed; the practice of married clergy; and liturgical errors. Patriarch Michael Cerularius responded to Humbert's action by excommunicating "all responsible" for the July 16 incident. He drew up a long list of Latin abuses, mostly of divergent liturgical practices such as the use of unleavened bread for the eucharist.

Although Cardinal Humbert acted only against the person of the patriarch and his sympathizers, and although the patriarch reacted only against Humbert himself, the attempt to restore unity between East and West in 1054 resulted in a permanent schism between the two churches which persists until today. Several gestures of reconciliation, such as the symbolic "lifting of the anathemas of 1054" by Pope Paul VI and

Patriarch Athenagoras I in 1966, were made, but to no avail.

The Papacy

The mid-eleventh century also saw the beginnings of a powerful reform movement centering on the papacy. Often, this movement is called the **Gregorian Reform**, for its most famous proponent, **Pope Gregory VII** (1073-1085), or **Hildebrand**. The movement sought to establish the independence of the Church from any secular authority. In the process, it greatly extended the claims of the papacy. This made any reconciliation with the East difficult. For example, in 1089, as part of an effort to reestablish good relations between the churches, the East asked **Pope Urban II** for a confession of faith. He refused to comply since such a compliance would presume that the bishop of Rome could be judged in the Church by another. Thus, although Patriarch Nicholas III of Constantinople (1084-1111) said: "Let the pope confess the orthodox faith and he will be first," this was never again to happen in history.

The Crusades

By the time of the first crusade in 1095, the Pope's position of leadership in Western society was well established. It was ultimately the crusades which sealed the schism between the churches. The crusaders took over Jerusalem in 1099, expelled the Moslems, and established a Latin hierarchy in place of the local, existing church order.

Kievan Russia

In Kievan Russia in the eleventh century the new Christian faith was flourishing. **Saint Anthony** (d. 1051) founded the monastery of the caves in Kiev, the **Kievo-Pecherskaya Lavra**. **Saint Theodosius** (d. 1074),

its greatest saint, came to be called the “founder of Russian monasticism.” Saint Theodosius followed the example of the humble Christ of the gospels in an evangelical form of spiritual life. This form has come to be known as Russian **kenoticism** which means a life of self-emptying humility and love for the brethren. (cf. Philippians 2:6) The Kievan Monastery of the Caves was the center of Christian charity and social concern, as well as of spiritual and intellectual labor and enlightenment.

Boris and Gleb

Among the saints of Kiev are numbered the brothers **Boris and Gleb** who were the sons of Saint Vladimir. They refused to fight their brother Sviatopolk in a power struggle after the death of their father. As they knew there was no hope of winning in battle, the two young brothers refused to fight in order to save the lives of their faithful followers who were certain to be punished if they did fight. As “sufferers of non-resistance,” Saints Boris and Gleb were the first to be canonized by the Russian Church in 1020. They were glorified — not as martyrs or Christian pacifists — but as those who laid down their lives that others might live.

Theological Works

During this period **Theophylactus of Bulgaria** was writing voluminous commentaries on the holy scriptures in the East. **Anselm of Canterbury** (d. 1109) in the West was producing his most influential theological discourses which contained the so-called “ontological proof” for the existence of God, a defense of the doctrine of the filioque, and the so-called “satisfaction theory” of the atonement in which it was contended that the death of Christ on the cross was the adequate sacrifice necessary to satisfy the justice and wrath of God the Father.

The West

The eleventh century in the West witnessed the **Cistercian reforms** of the Benedictine order (now known as the “trappists”). This movement’s greatest representative, **Bernard of Clairvaux**, was an ascetical, mystical theologian and church activist. He preached crusades and fought with **Abelard**, the famous author of **Sic et Non**. The **Carthusian** movement of eremitic monasticism began as well at this time.



Twelfth Century

Major Trends

The twelfth century saw the continual struggle of the **Comneni** imperial dynasty in Constantinople with the crusading Latins from the West and the encroaching Moslem Turks in the East. The emperor **Alexius Comnenus** officially sanctioned Mount Athos as the center of Orthodox monasticism. **Euthymios Zigabenus** produced his **Dogmatic Panoply**, a handbook of the official doctrines of the Church. Although there was a genuine interest in theology in the empire at this time, the actual theological work in Eastern Christendom was limited to a repetition and cataloging of traditional doctrines.

Art and architecture developed in the twelfth century with such classical Byzantine monuments as the church buildings and mosaics of the Church of **Saint Luke** and the Church of **Daphni** near Athens. In Russia **Saint Alypius** (d. 1114), the “father of Russian iconography,” lived in this period. Some of the greatest architectural and iconographic achievements of Novgorod, Vladimir, Suzdal, and Pskov came from this time.

Kievan Russia

Christianity in Kievan Russia continued to expand and develop. A fire in Kiev in 1124 is reported to have destroyed six hundred church edifices — an indication of the great development of this cosmopolitan city which had become a leading center of European and Byzantine culture and trade. Early in this century, the Prince **Vladimir Monomakh** (d. 1125) wrote his famous “charge to my children,” a document intended to guide his sons in their lives as Christian leaders. Byzantine influence was still very strong in Kievan Christianity. The **Russian Primary Chronicle** containing the lives of many early Kievan saints, was edited traditionally by the monk **Nestor** of the caves monastery.

Serbia

The Serbians were granted statehood by the Byzantine emperor through the efforts of the ruler **Nemanya** (1113-1199). It was Nemanya's son, Rastko, who fled to Mount Athos to become a monk by the name of Sava. He was destined to become the great national saint and leader of the Serbian people. Sava finally brought his father to Mount Athos to end his life in the monastic habit with the name of **Simeon**, canonized by the Church as **Saint Simeon the Myrrh-flowing**. The Byzantine emperor **Angelos** gave the Serbian father and son the monastery of **Hilandari** on Mount Athos which remains until today as the Serbian monastery on the holy mountain.

The West

Together with the centralizing of papal power and the victory of the papacy over the secular rulers, the twelfth century West saw the rise of the **Victorine** school of Augustinian theology led by **Hugo** (d. 1141) and **Richard of St. Victor** (d. 1173). At this time **Peter Lombard** wrote his influential **Sentences**, while on the more popular level the spiritualistic, dualistic movements of the **Waldensians** and **Albigensians** were making their impact.

Thirteenth Century

The Fourth Crusade

The thirteenth century began with what has been considered the final confirmation of the schism between East and West, the **fourth crusade**. In 1204 the crusaders sacked Constantinople. They destroyed and pillaged the churches. They desecrated the altars. They stole the holy objects. A Latin, **Thomas Morosini**, was named patriarch of Constantinople, and a Frank was named emperor. Now, for the first time, the Latin West became an open enemy in the minds of the Greek people. Writings were directed against the papacy and the Latin Church as such. The Latin rule of Constantinople lasted until 1261 when the emperor **Michael Paleologos** recovered the city.

The Council of Lyons

Michael III was in the unbearable situation of being attacked on the East by the Turks, and having no assurance that the Western Latins would not return again. For political reasons, therefore, he sent a delegation of bishops to the council of the Western Church in **Lyons** in 1274 hoping to gain sympathy, and military and economic aid for his crumbling empire. The Westerners proposed to the legates of Michael what was to become a classical formula of church union in subsequent centuries. They proposed that the East could keep its liturgical rites. The use of the word **filioque** in the creed could be optional as long as the doctrine it professed was not denied as heretical. The pope was to be recognized as supreme.

Michael's legates at the council of Lyons went further than was asked of them. They officially accepted the Roman formula of the papacy, and the Roman doctrine of the **filioque** — the first time in history it was required. The peace and help from the West which Michael desired lasted until his death in 1282.

When Michael died the acts of the union of Lyons were immediately rejected by the Eastern bishops. The

emperor was buried without the funeral rites of the Church.

Serbia

In 1217 **Sava** went to Nicea to obtain the blessing of the church of Constantinople for an independent national church for the Serbians. In 1219 Sava himself was consecrated as the first “archbishop of the Serbian lands” by **Manuel**, patriarch of Constantinople, in the presence of the emperor Theodore. On Ascension Day in 1220, at an assembly of the Serbians at the Zitcha monastery, the newly-consecrated archbishop Sava crowned his brother **Stephan**, the grand zhupan, as the first “king of all the Serbian lands.”

After a life of outstanding leadership, after passing through many grave trials and difficulties, after travelling extensively throughout the Christian East, Sava died on January 14, 1235. Sava was succeeded in office by **Arsenios**, a man of his own choosing who was elevated to the episcopal rank by Sava himself. Archbishop Sava, the founder and father of the Serbian Orthodox Church and one of the truly outstanding personalities in Orthodox Church history, has been canonized a saint of the Church, together with his father, **Saint Simeon**, his brother, **Saint Stephan the First-Crowned**, and his successor, **Saint Arsenios**.

Bulgaria

The thirteenth century witnessed the reestablishment of a national church for the **Bulgarians** with the recognition of the archbishop of Trnovo as the head of the church in the Bulgarian lands.

Russia

Russia in the thirteenth century was overcome by the Mongolian invasion. The **Tatar Yoke** fell over the land when the **Khan Batu** led four hundred thousand men

against the Russians in 1237. The Kievan state collapsed in 1240.

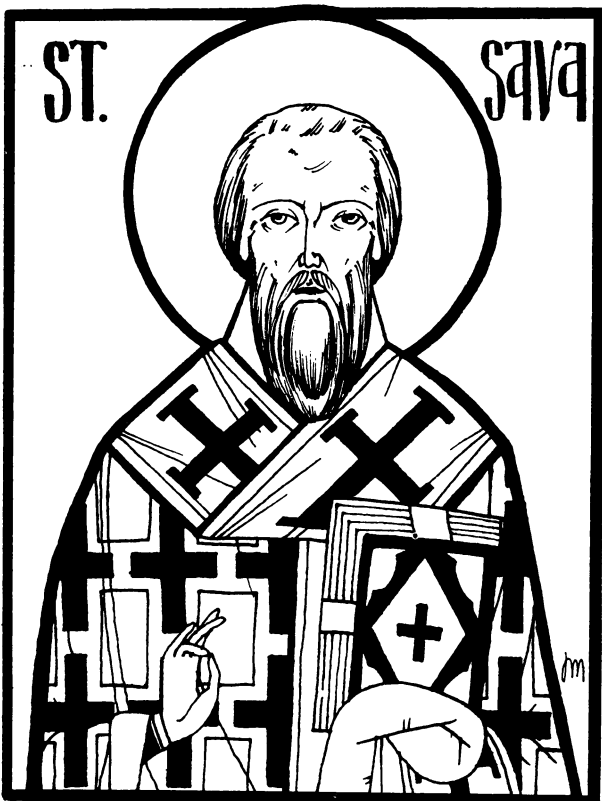
In 1231 **Alexander Nevsky** became the prince of Novgorod. This city-republic in the North had its own unique form of republican government as well as its own particular spiritual, architectural, and iconographic tradition. In 1240 Alexander led the Russians in a victorious battle against the Roman Catholic Swedes. In 1242 he once again led the Russian people to victory over the Teutonic knights who were attacking the Russian lands. Alexander then travelled to Khan Batu's headquarters in 1247, seeking mercy for the Russian peoples under the Tatar Yoke. Alexander agreed to pay tribute to the Khan in order to have peace for his people. He returned from Mongolia with the title of Grand Prince of Kiev. He died at the age of forty-two in 1263. In 1380 he was canonized a saint by the Church for his personal holiness, his military bravery, and his practical wisdom and diplomacy — all of which he dedicated selflessly to the service of his people as a true Christian statesman.

Alexander Nevsky's son **Daniel** went north to Moscow, beyond the Tatar Yoke, where he served as a prince from 1263 until the end of the century. **Saint Cyril** (1242-1281) and **Saint Peter** (1281-1326), Metropolitans of Kiev, who were residing in the Muscovite principality, were the outstanding hierarchs of the period.

The West

The thirteenth century has been called the "greatest of centuries" in the Western Church. **Innocent III** succeeded in upholding the prestige and power of the papacy. The **Fourth Lateran Council** in 1215 defined the official doctrines of the Western Church. **Francis of Assisi** (d. 1226) founded his Franciscan Order with its first great members **Anthony of Padua** (d. 1231) and

the theologians **Bonaventure** (d. 1274) and **Duns Scotus** (d. 1308). The Spanish **Dominic** founded the Dominican Order of preachers with its great theologian **Albertus Magnus** (d. 1280) and his famous disciple **Thomas Aquinas** (d. 1274) who wrote the logical “summae” which dominated official Roman Catholic theology until the Second Vatican Council of the second half of the twentieth century. The mystical theologian **Meister Eickhart** (d. 1339) was also a member of the Dominican order. The **Carmelite** order, together with a number of smaller religious groups, emerged at this time in the Latin Church.



Fourteenth Century

Gregory Palamas

The fourteenth century was the time of the Palamite controversy in the Eastern Church. **Gregory Palamas** (d. 1359) was a monk of Mount Athos. He was a practitioner of the method of prayer called **hesychasm** (*hesychia* means **silence**). By this method the person utilizes a rigorous bodily discipline in order to unite his mind and heart in God through continuous repetition of the name of Jesus, usually in the form of the Jesus Prayer: **Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner**. Through the use of this method of prayer the hesychast monks claimed to gain genuine communion with God, including the spiritual vision of the Uncreated Light of Divinity such as that seen by Moses on Mount Sinai, and the apostles of Christ at the transfiguration of the Lord on Mount Tabor.

In 1326 the Calabrian **Barlaam**, a Greek former uniate and a representative of the emerging humanist tradition of the Western renaissance, came to Constantinople. Barlaam and some Byzantine humanists who were highly influenced by Western philosophical and theological ideas, ridiculed the practice of hesychast prayer. They generally denied the possibility for men to be in genuine union with God. In 1333 Gregory Palamas confronted Barlaam's position and defended hesychasm. He established the Orthodox doctrine that man can truly know God and can enter into communion with Him through Christ and the Holy Spirit in the Church.

Essence and Energy

A council in 1346 upheld Gregory's teaching. The holy monk made his famous distinction between the unknowable and incomprehensible **Essence** or **Super-essence** of God, and the **actions, operations, or energies** of God which are truly uncreated and divine (such as the divine light). These **energies** are communicated to men by divine grace and are open to human participation, knowledge, and experience.

After some years of political turmoil and theological controversy, councils held in 1347 and in 1351 (the year that Gregory became archbishop of Thessalonica) again upheld Gregory's position as exactly that of the Bible and the Tradition of the Orthodox Church. Since that time the theological distinction between the divine **Superessence** and the divine **energies** has become an official part of the doctrine of the Orthodox Church. Gregory Palamas was canonized a saint of the Orthodox Church in 1368 — just nine years after his death.

John V Paleologos and Rome

The leading Byzantine emperor of the fourteenth century **John V Paleologos** (1341-1391) continued to have the hope that the West would come to the aid of the Greeks in the face of the ever-increasing Turkish pressures in the East. In 1369 John personally entered into communion with the Roman Church, without an attempt at formal church union. This act produced no lasting results either for the ecclesiastical or political destiny of Constantinople.

Russia

The Russians continued in the south under the Tatar Yoke. In the northern wooded areas of Muscovy, led by the Prince **John Kalita** (d. 1341), and the **Metropolitan Alexis** as governing regent (1353-1378), the northern Russians remained free and continued to prosper. The genuine “builder of Russia” in the north at this time was **Saint Sergius of Radonezh** (d. 1392).

Saint Sergius

Saint Sergius was born in Rostov in 1314. He became a monk in 1334, going alone into the forests to fast and pray, giving the name of the **Holy Trinity** to his monastic chapel. Many persons followed St. Sergius,

SAINT
OF RAD-

SERGIE
ONEZH



some to join him in his monastic life, and others to live around his monastic community as pioneers and settlers. St. Sergius was extremely humble. He dressed in the poorest clothes. He continually worked for others. He taught by example only, fleeing from his position of abbot — which had been forced on him by Metropolitan Alexis — when he felt that the monks rejected his leadership. He was a strict ascetic, a practitioner of silent prayer, and a mystic graced with splendid divine visions and living communion with God.

In 1380 Saint Sergius — who was regularly consulted by Metropolitan Alexis and the national leaders — blessed the prince **Dimitri Donskoi** to engage in battle with the Tartars. Dimitri's victory marked the beginning of the end of the Tatar control over the Russian lands.

The legacy of Saint Sergius to Russia and the Orthodox Church is immeasurable. Eleven of his disciples founded monastic centers in northern Russia around which lands were settled and developed. The mystical, spiritual life of the Russian Church, as well as the interrelation between the Church and the socio-political life of the Russian nation in later times was rooted in the person and work of Sergius of Radonezh.

Saint Stephen of Perm

A contemporary of St. Sergius, **Saint Stephen of Perm** (d. 1396) was a learned bishop who undertook missionary work among the Zyrian tribes. Although his work did not remain, Saint Stephen created the Zyrian alphabet and translated the church writings into the native language. Thus he combined the Byzantine tradition of fostering local church life and laying the spiritual foundations for future missionary work of the Russian Church among the Siberian tribes and in Japan and Alaska.

Saint Andrew Rublev

Saint Andrew Rublev (d.c. 1430), the greatest Russian iconographer and perhaps the greatest iconographer in Orthodox history, did his marvelous work at the end of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth centuries. He was a monk of the monastery of St. Sergius. He was the artistic follower of the iconographer **Theophanes the Greek**, and he worked together with his friend, **Daniel Chorny**. Rublev's most famous work is the icon of the **Holy Trinity**, painted for the Trinity-St. Sergius monastery, depicting in a perfect harmony of colors and lines the **Three Angels** who came to Abraham in the Old Testament. During this same period there was a renaissance of church art in the Byzantine empire, with many famous frescoes and mosaics coming from this period.

The Serbians and the Bulgarians

The Serbians were enjoying a flourishing period of their history under the rule of **Stephen Dushan**. The Serbian Church became a patriarchate in 1346. Also at this time, **Saint Clement of Ochrid** (d. 1375) lived and worked among the Bulgarians, being a leader of national enlightenment. Simultaneously, the Bulgarian monastery of **Zoographos** was established on Mount Athos.

Liturgical Development

Liturgically the fourteenth century reveals the order of worship in the Church as virtually the same as it is today. The **Commentary on the Divine Liturgy** was written by **Nicholas Cabasilas**. He also wrote a popular work called **Life in Christ**, which gives a symbolical interpretation of the liturgy showing ritual details which still remain in the Church practices today. For the first time the **prothesis** (proskomedie), as a separate rite preceding the liturgy of the Word, is found in the liturgical books.

The liturgical commentaries of **Simeon of Thessalonica** (d. 1420) which provide detailed information about church worship came from this period. An interesting note in Simeon's writings reveal that at this time the **Holy Eucharist** was still being given to Orthodox Christians in the sacrament of **matrimony**, and the blessed "common cup" was given only to those who were not allowed to receive Holy Communion in the Church.

The West

The West in the fourteenth century saw the "Babylonian captivity" of the Roman popes in Avignon (1303-1378), and the "great schism" within the Western Church between various claimants to the papal office. **Catherine of Sienna** lived at this time, as did **John Wycliffe**, the forerunner of the reformation in England, and the English mystical writers **Walter Hilton** and **Juliana of Norwich**. The end of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth centuries witnessed the development of the **Brothers of the Common Life** in the low countries. This movement's greatest representative was **Thomas a Kempis** who was the author of the famous **Imitation of Christ**. The writing of the **Divine Comedy** by **Dante Alighieri** (d. 1321) and the painting of **Giotto** (d. 1337) was during this period of history.

Fifteenth Century

The Papacy

The West in the fifteenth century was in turmoil over the relationship between the papacy and church councils. Some held that the papacy was supreme. Others held that the authority of the church councils supercedes that of the pope. One of the councils of the period, **Ferrara-Florence** (1438-1439) was supported by the popes. Representatives of the Eastern Church arrived at this council once again looking for help in the struggle against the Turks. Among the Eastern Churchmen who were accepted at the council on "equal terms" with the Latins, were the emperor of Constantinople, **John VIII**; the patriarch of Constantinople, **Joseph**; and the Metropolitan of Kiev, a Greek named **Isidore**.

The Council of Florence

At the council of Florence the Eastern representatives accepted a strong doctrine of **papal power** — although the issue was not deeply discussed — and the doctrines of **filioque** and **purgatory**. The Byzantine emperor pressed to stop theological discussions in the hopes of completing the union. All the Orthodox bishops signed the union statement except **Mark Eugenikos**, the bishop of Ephesus.

The union of Florence was not publicly proclaimed until 1452 in Saint Sophia in Constantinople. On May 29, 1453, the Turks under **Mohammed II** took the city which was renamed **Istanbul**, marking the end of the Byzantine Empire. The first act of the patriarch **Gennadios Scholarios** after the fall of Constantinople was to repudiate the union of Florence. The patriarch was under strong pressure of **St. Mark of Ephesus** in this action. Saint Mark, the firm defender of Orthodoxy against what has come to be called through him the "unrighteous union," was canonized a saint for his actions.

Russia

Just as the Byzantine empire was falling to the Moslems, the seeds of the coming Russian empire were beginning to take root in Moscow. **Ivan III the Great** (1462-1505), the Muscovite prince, succeeded in extending his role in the Russian north by defeating and annexing Novgorod. He married the Byzantine princess **Sophia Paleologos** in 1472, and accepted the title of **Tsar** (the Slav form of the old imperial title of Caesar) and the symbol of the **double-headed eagle**. The ideology of Moscow as the “**third Rome**” after Constantinople was being born.

In fifteenth-century Russia a great controversy was waged over the role which the Church should play relative to the political and social life of the nation. The two leaders of the controversy — both of whom shared the legacy of St. Sergius, and both of whom are canonized saints of the Church — were **Nilus of the Sora** (**Nil Sorsky**, 1433-1508) and **Joseph of Volotsk** (1439-1515).

Saint Nilus led the party of the “**non-possessors**” who lived beyond the Volga River. They are sometimes called the “**transvolgans**.” The “**non-possessors**” held that the Church, particularly the monasteries, should be free from owning and ruling over large properties. They held that the Church should be free from the direct influence and control of the state. They defended poverty as the chief virtue, with humility and spiritual freedom dominating the contemplative, silent life for monks. They were the inheritors of the mystical, hesychastic, and kenotic tradition of Saint Sergius and the early Kievan spirituality.

The “**possessors**” were led by Saint Joseph. Hence, they are sometimes called the “**Josephites**.” They held that the Church and state should be in the closest possible relationship, and that the Church should serve the social and political needs of the emerging Russian nation. The ideal of the “**possessors**” was that the

Church, particularly the monasteries, should control vast properties. The Church should foster a life of ascetic discipline and social service among the people which would be rooted in the strict observance of liturgical and cultic rituals. In this tendency the “possessors” also followed the tradition of Saint Sergius. Both Saint Sergius and Metropolitan Alexius played a very prominent role in Russian social and political life of the fourteenth century, as well as continuing the original Byzantine legacy of the Russian Church and nation which was present in the land from its earliest Kievan beginnings.

Although the spirit of the “non-possessors” always remained in Russian Orthodoxy, it was the way of the “possessors” which dominated Russian ecclesiastical and national development in subsequent centuries.

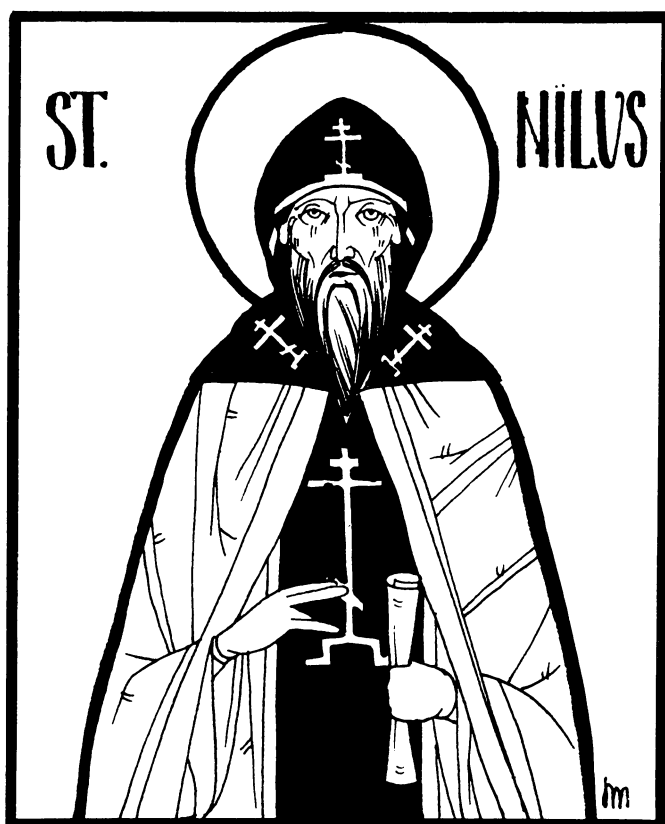
The Fall of Byzantium

Serbia fell to the Turks in 1459, Greece in 1459-60, Bosnia in 1463, and Egypt finally in 1517. For the next four hundred years the Moslem Turks held sway over the Orthodox Christians in the former Byzantine empire in the East.

The West

In the West, the fifteenth century saw the continual resistance to the power of the papacy by the conciliar movement mentioned already; by the rise of national consciousness among the various Western European peoples; by the religious movements forerunning the reformation era; and by the humanist movements of the renaissance now becoming most powerful in their stress on the natural man through the rebirth of interest in ancient Roman and Hellenistic culture. The name of **Erasmus** (d. 1536) must be mentioned in this regard, as well as the artists and scientists such as **Leonardo da Vinci** (d. 1519) and **Raphael** (d. 1520).

Further mention must be made of the Czech leader **Jan Hus** who was condemned and burned at the stake in 1415 at the Council of Constance for his opposition to the pope and the practices of the Roman Church; of **Savonarola**, the fiery Dominican friar of Florence, who was burned to death by papal instigation in 1498 for his denunciation and condemnation of churchly wickedness and sin; of **Fra Angelico** (d. 1455), the Florentine painter, many of whose masterpieces hang in Savonarola's monastery of San Marco in Florence; and of **Donatello** (d. 1466), **Fra Filippo Lippi** (d. 1469), and **Botticelli** (d. 1510.)



Sixteenth Century

Russia during the Reign of Ivan the Terrible

In Russia, in the sixteenth century, the “**third Rome**” theory became a political reality. The monk **Philotheus of Pskov** informed the Muscovite **Tsar Basil III** (1505-1533) of his vision based on the book of **Daniel** that the Russian tsardom was to be the final earthly reign of God’s People. The first Rome had fallen through heresy. The second Rome, Constantinople, had fallen through sin. The **third Rome**, Moscow, was standing. There was to be no fourth Rome.

Tsar Ivan III the Terrible (1533-1584) established his reign on this foundation. He was crowned tsar in 1547 as the successor to the Byzantine emperor. He ruthlessly persecuted his enemies as he subjected both church and state to his personal control. Among Ivan’s many victims was **Metropolitan Philip of Moscow**. He was strangled by the tsar’s henchmen in 1568 for his open opposition to the actions of the mad ruler. Philip has since been canonized by the Church as a saint.

In 1547-1549 the Church of Russia formally canonized many saints from different parts of the country, utilizing the national veneration of these holy people — who were previously honored only locally — as a means toward national unification. In 1551, the **Council of a Hundred Chapters** — the **Stoglav Sobor** — further asserted the supremacy of Russian Orthodoxy over the other Eastern Orthodox churches.

After the Russian defeat of the Turks in Kazan in 1551, Ivan built the famous **Church of St. Basil** in the Moscow kremlin in honor of Saint Basil, the Moscow Fool-for-Christ (d. 1552). This church building is known for its combination of Christian and Oriental styles.

During the early part of Ivan’s reign his spiritual father was the priest **Sylvestr**. Many of Ivan’s early reforms were guided by this simple pastor. Sylvestr was the main contributor to a book called **Domostroi** or **Home-builder** which taught Russian Christian fam-

ilies how they should arrange their lives according to the ritual and ethical practices of the Orthodox Church. The **Domostroi** was a very popular book which influenced generations of Russian families. Ivan exiled Sylvestr in 1559.

Also during Ivan the Terrible's reign, Metropolitan **Makarii of Moscow** (1542-1563) wrote twelve volumes called **Monthly Readings**. It was a vast collection of commentaries on the Bible, the lives of the saints, sermons, and other material for spiritual reading. At this time, the "non-possessor" **Saint Maxim the Greek** (d. 1556) was imprisoned and tortured for his attempts to revise and correct the liturgical books of the Russian Church. **Saint Gury** (d. 1563), the bishop of Kazan, was carrying on his mission among the Siberian tribes.

Russia during the Reign of Theodore

During the reign of Ivan's son, **Theodore**, the Patriarch of Constantinople, **Jeremiah II**, came to Moscow in quest of aid. The patriarchal church of Constantinople was under the power of the Turks. So, under the obvious pressures of that situation, the patriarch recognized the Muscovite bishop, **Job**, as the first **Patriarch of All Russia** in 1589. The installation document of the new patriarch was almost a repetition of the prophesy of Philotheus about Moscow as the third Rome. Thus the theory, which had become practice under Ivan III, was now officially affirmed by the highest prelate in the Orthodox Church. In 1593 the Russian Church received the approval of its status as a patriarchate from the bishops of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and Antioch. Thus, it was officially recognized as the fifth in honor among the Orthodox patriarchates.

The Union of Brest-Litovsk

The sixteenth century saw the development of the Polish-Lithuanian kingdom on the Western boundary

of Russia. By 1569 Poland and Lithuania had become one under **Sigismund**. The kingdom had taken segments of the Russian lands as far east as Kiev — territory populated almost exclusively by Orthodox Christians. Jesuits had entered this territory earlier, bringing Latin learning and practices. The result was the **Union of Brest-Litovsk** in 1596 through which the Orthodox bishops of the area effected a union with the Roman Church on the foundations agreed to in Florence a century earlier. The rites and customs of the Church for the masses of Orthodox faithful taken into the “**unia**” remained the same. The ecclesiastical hierarchy, clerical, and academic leadership of the Church was totally subjected to the Latin discipline and doctrine of the Roman papacy. This union of 1596 remained in effect in the territories which have continued to be ruled by non-Orthodox governments such as Poland, Austro-Hungary, and Czechoslovakia.

From its inception, the uniate movement was always confronted with substantial opposition. Opposers were mainly Orthodox laymen who were organized into brotherhoods and blessed by **Patriarch Jeremiah of Constantinople** to defend the Orthodox faith, as early as 1588. In the beginning the anti-uniate movement was helped by the use of the printing press of **Ivan Fedorov**. This man was expelled from Muscovy with his “diabolical invention” by Ivan III.

The East

In the second half of the sixteenth century, the Eastern patriarchs were in contact with the Protestant reformers in the West. **Jeremiah II**, after a careful study of the **Augsburg Confession** — which was sent to him for his inspection — soundly declared the Lutheran teachings to be heretical.

During this same period, **Saints George and John the New** (1526) were added to the Church’s list of saints for

their martyrdom under the Moslems. Other Greek saints at this time were **Saints Vissarion, Bishop of Larissa** (d. 1541) and **Saint Philotheos of Athens** (d. 1589).

The West and the Protestant Reformation

The West in the sixteenth century went through the Protestant reformation and the counter-reformation of the Roman Church. **Martin Luther** (d. 1545), **John Calvin** (d. 1564) and **Ulrich Zwingli** (d. 1545) led the reformation movement on the European continent. They attacked the practical abuses of the Roman Church as well as its official teachings. **King Henry VIII** founded the **Angelican Church** by the **Act of Supremacy** in 1534 and **John Knox** (d. 1572) brought the Calvinist faith to Scotland.

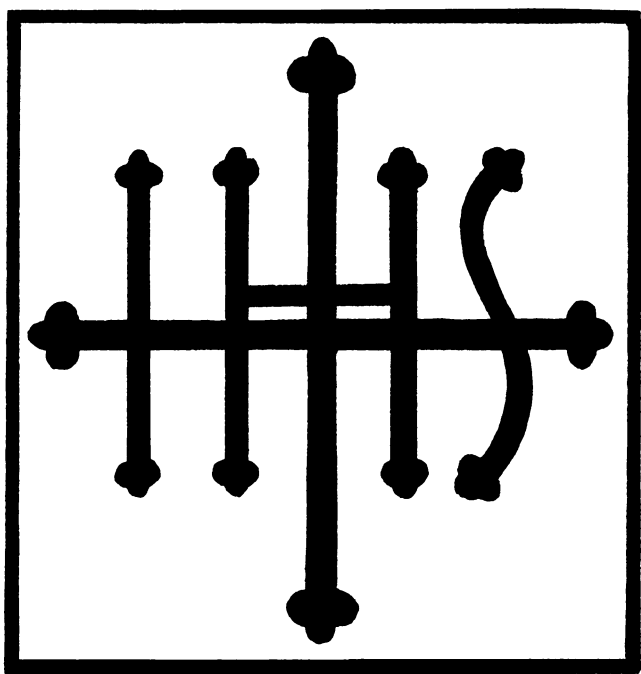
The Roman Church held the **Council of Trent** (1561-1563) which officially formulated the doctrines of purgatory, indulgences, transubstantiation of bread and wine in the eucharist and other positions attacked and denied by the Protestants. The Protestant position is based on the doctrine of justification by grace through faith alone. The Bible is the sole churchly authority, interpreted directly by each believer under the inspiration of God. The sacramental life of the Church is reduced to Baptism and the Lord's Supper, which is understood primarily as a memorial meal, in no sense a sacrifice. The Council of Trent reinforced the doctrines of the supremacy of the pope of Rome and the authority of the church hierarchy. Both these doctrines were main targets of the Protestant attack.

The West and the Counter-reformation

The Roman counter-reformation was led by the **Jesuits**. The **Society of Jesus** was founded in 1534 by **Ignatius of Loyola** (d. 1556) for the specific purpose of defending the Roman papacy. **Francis Xavier** (d. 1552)

was the famous Jesuit missionary who reached the Far East during this period. The Dutch Jesuit, **Peter Canisius** (d. 1597) led the counter-reformation in Germany, writing his famous **Catechism** which became a standard text of post-reformation catholicism.

In Spain the mystical writers, **Teresa of Avila** (d. 1582) and **John of the Cross** (d. 1591) were leading the reform of the religious life of the Roman Church. In Geneva, the Roman bishop of the city, **Francis de Sales** (d. 1622) was writing his works about the spiritual life. During this same time the artist **Titian** (d. 1576) was painting and the musician **Palestrina** (d. 1594) was producing his grandiose musical compositions which were used in the Roman Church.



Seventeenth Century

Russia: Time of Troubles

In the seventeenth century Russia entered the “time of troubles.” **Boris Godonov**, who ruled from 1598, died in 1605. **Basil Shuiskii** ruled until 1610 when a Polish tsar was crowned. During this time of political and social upheaval, the Poles seized control of the country. They captured Moscow and the monastery of St. Sergius. **Patriarch Germogen**, the national leader, was imprisoned and starved to death in 1612, later being canonized a saint. From the end of the reign of Ivan III Russia was besieged with political turmoil, famine, and national disaster. **Saint Juliana Ossorgine** (d. 1604) was glorified by the Church at her canonization for her compassionate love and care of the suffering people.

Russia: The Old Believer Schism

The “time of troubles” was followed in northern Russia by the **Old Believer Schism**. **Michael Romanov** (d. 1645) was crowned tsar in 1613. His father **Philaret** (d. 1633) became the patriarch of the church and the country’s actual ruler in 1619. From 1645-1676 **Alexis Romanov**, a most devout and pious man, ruled as tsar. In 1652 Alexis chose the extremely popular and talented metropolitan of Novgorod, **Nikon**, to be patriarch of the Russian Church. Nikon refused the position at first. He accepted when he received the formal pledge of the leaders of church and state that they would give unwavering obedience to the gospels, the canons, the fathers of the Church, and to him personally as the “chief pastor and supreme father” of the Russian Church. During Great Lent in 1653 Nikon began his reforms of church practices which were to rend asunder both church and nation.

The reforms of Nikon were reasonable and unrevolutionary by modern standards. They called for the adjustment of the Russian liturgical practices to conform with those of the other Eastern Orthodox Churches. They called for corrections in the wording

and spelling of liturgical texts. Concretely this reform meant that the Russians would henceforth cross themselves with three fingers instead of two, sing “alleluia” three times during psalmody instead of twice, and make other similar changes. In the Russia of Nikon’s time such reforms — which appear slight today — were explosive. They directly denied the “third Rome” theory and practice of the Russian church and state. They put Russian Orthodoxy in subjugation to the Eastern patriarchates which were presently suffering under the Turks because of their sins (according to Russian mentality).

In 1657 the tsar Alexis returned from the fighting on the Polish front to find his church and nation in chaos. The opposition to Nikon was led by parish priests who themselves were considered “reformers” because they had been calling for a return among the people to strict obedience to the traditional rites and customs of the Russian Church. Nikon, who acted as the tsar’s regent in his absence, felt confident that Alexis would support his actions by punishing those who were disobedient to him as “chief pastor and supreme father” of the Russian Church. The tsar, however, was not pleased with Nikon’s actions. His open statement of displeasure caused the patriarch to resign in 1658 after publicly rebuking the tsar. From that time until 1666 Russia had no acting patriarch.

Alexis tried to make up with Nikon, but to no avail. In 1666 the Eastern patriarchs were consulted. A council was called in Moscow, presided over by the bishops of Alexandria and Antioch. It was engineered by the unscrupulous Metropolitan of Gaza, **Paisios Ligarides**. The council first excommunicated the opponents of Nikon’s reforms — several million believers — from the Church. These opponents of Nikon, led by the **Archpriest Avvacum**, were called the **Old Believers** or **Old Ritualists**. The council then

unfroked Nikon for deserting his office and for showing disrespect to the tsar. The council officially refuted the **Council of a Hundred Chapters** which was held in 1551 — the most venerated of Russian Church sobors. Thus the council of 1666-1667 formally renounced the “third Rome” theory and the assumed supremacy of Russian Orthodoxy over all other churches.

Nikon remained under arrest until he died in 1681. Although he never changed his position and never yielded his opposition to the council of 1666-1667, he was buried in the church with full patriarchal dignity. The opponents of Nikon, the dissenting **Old Believers**, rejected the council and went into schism with the official Russian Church. Their leaders, such as Avvacum, were sought out and violently persecuted. They were sent into exile and harsh labor, a condition which endeared them to the masses of people who shared their rigorous, conservative, unyielding spirit. **Archpriest Avvacum** was burned alive with three of his supporters in 1682 for the “great blasphemies . . . uttered against the tsar and his household.” His autobiography has become a classic of Russian literature.

In 1682 **Peter the Great** became tsar. His extreme and violent attempts to westernize Russia, and his fierce opposition to traditional Russian ways caused the dissenters to think of him as the Anti-Christ. The Old Believers, in their desire to preserve the pure Orthodox faith and rituals of Russia, succeeded in preserving ancient Russian forms of iconography and liturgical chant which otherwise would likely have been lost in history.

The Unia

In the seventeenth century, in the south of Russia, the unia continued in force, although large amounts of territory had been won back by the Russians. The lay

brotherhoods in the **Ukraine** and **Galicia** served Orthodoxy well during this time by their absolute rejection of the uniate movement. Among these lay leaders were **Constantine Ostrozhskii** (d. 1608) and **Mileti Smotriskii** who wrote his **Lamentations of the Eastern Church** in 1610.

Peter Mogila

In 1615 the theological academy of Kiev was founded. In 1620 **Theophanes**, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, consecrated seven bishops for the Orthodox in secret from the government. In 1633 **Wladyslaw IV**, the successor to **Sigismund**, gave permission for an Orthodox metropolitan of Kiev. **Peter Mogila** (d. 1647), the leading man of the Kiev theological school, was chosen. Mogila was fiercely anti-Roman but he was trained in Latin schools and had a deep respect for Latin scholastic learning. Through his many works, which included a Slavic translation of the catechism of the Jesuit Canisius and a priest's Service book, Latin influences entered the Orthodox Church in doctrinal formulation and liturgical practices. Mogila's works were judged acceptable by the Orthodox bishops in a council in **Kiev** (1640) and again in **Jassy**, in Moldavia (1643). Nevertheless, together with the forced westernization of Peter the Great's policies, they were a primary cause for almost two hundred years of captivity to Western influences in the theology and piety of the Orthodox people.

Cyril Lukaris

Cyril Lukaris (d. 1638) served as patriarch of Alexandria and patriarch of Constantinople on seven different occasions under the Turks before they finally drowned him. His "**confession of faith**" was forthrightly condemned by the same church councils in Kiev and Jassy which upheld the orthodoxy of Peter

Mogila's catechism and service books. The "confession" of Cyril was a thoroughly Calvinist statement of faith. In 1662 a council of Eastern patriarchs in **Jerusalem** confirmed the decisions of the council of Jassy, and published a "**Confession of Faith of the Eastern Patriarchs.**"

The East

In the seventeenth century, the Turks destroyed the independence of the **Serbian** and **Bulgarian** churches. They submitted them directly to Constantinople thus establishing the Greek "phanariot" rule over the non-Greek Orthodox Christians in the Turkish empire. At this time in Russia, the bishop **Saint Dimitri of Rostov** (d. 1709) published his spiritual writings which included a twelve-volume edition of the **Lives of the Saints**. The holy abbot, **Saint Job** (d. 1651) of the Pochaev monastery also lived at this time.

The West

In the West the nations were recovering from the religious upheavals of the reformation and counter-reformation. America was being settled by the religious dissenters from England: Puritans, Congregationalists, Baptists, and Quakers who were members of the **Society of Friends** founded by George Fox (d. 1691). In 1611 in England, the **King James Version** of the Bible was published. The Roman Church of this time was troubled by the movement of **Jansenism**, the doctrine which held that grace is given only to the elect of God. At this time in France, **Vincent de Paul** (d. 1660) founded his order dedicated to the works of charity and service to the poor and sick.

Eighteenth Century

In the course of seventy-three years in the eighteenth century, the patriarchial throne of Constantinople changed occupants forty-eight times. Some men held the position of patriarch as many as five different times. This is indicative of the horrible conditions in which the Christians were living under Turkish domination. Although some Serbians did manage to migrate into Austria and Hungary where they were given their own dioceses, for those Christians who remained under Turkish control this was the darkest hour. This time was the period when there lived three of the greatest saints of modern times.

Saint Cosmas Aitolos

Saint Cosmas Aitolos (d. 1779) has been called the greatest missionary of modern Greece and the father of the modern Greek nation. St. Cosmas was a monk of Mount Athos who left the Holy Mountain in order to spread the gospel of Christ among the Greeks living under Turkish subjugation. The saint left no writings of his own. However, he was an outstanding preacher and teacher whose words have been recorded. He also was a wonder-worker. Saint Cosmas died a martyr's death at the hands of the Turks.

Saint Macarios of Corinth

Saint Macarios of Corinth (d. 1805) was the younger contemporary of Saint Cosmas. He spent time on Mount Athos where he defended the strict observance of Orthodox liturgical practices. He was a missionary preacher who was elected bishop of Corinth, but who was unable to function in the position. He is most famous for his insistence on the necessity and propriety of the regular and frequent reception of Holy Communion. The saint wrote many spiritual writings, many of which are on this very theme of the need for the faithful to participate in the Sacraments.

Saint Nicodemas the Hagiorite

Saint Nicodemas the Hagiorite (d. 1809) was in the same spirit as Saints Cosmas and Macarios. He was also a monk on Mount Athos where he was one of the leaders of the spiritual revival of Greek Orthodoxy under Turkish domination. He is best known for his editing of spiritual writings, including those of Saint Macarios of Corinth. His most famous work is the **Philokalia**, a collection of spiritual and ascetical writings of the fathers of the Eastern Church.

Russia: The Holy Governing Synod

The eighteenth century was a period of grave difficulty for the Orthodox Church in Russia. **Peter the Great** ruled until 1725, taking the title of emperor. He ruled the church with great power, submitting it totally to his personal demands and desires. When **Patriarch Adrian** died in 1700, Peter appointed the ambitious bishop of Novgorod, **Stefan Iavorskii** (d. 1772) to hold the office, promising an election. In 1721, Peter issued the **Ecclesiastical Regulation**. It was written by the protestantizing Ukrainian **Theophan Prokopovich** (d. 1738), and it officially abolished the patriarchate of the Russian Church. **The Holy Governing Synod** was put in its place.

The **Holy Synod** was made up of bishops, priests, and laymen appointed by the emperor and subject to him through its secular head, the government official called the **ober-procurator**. The **Holy Synod** was patterned to conform with the administrative system of the protestant churches of the West which Peter admired and envied. This radical violation of traditional, canonical Orthodox church order in Russia — imposed on the church by the emperor — was formally ratified and recognized by the Eastern patriarchs. It lasted until 1918 when a patriarch was once again elected for the Russian Church and the unorthodox method of ecclesiastical administration was abolished.

The first president of the Holy Governing Synod to be appointed by Peter the Great was **Stefan Iavorskii**, the Latinizing Ukrainian. Its designer, as we have seen, was **Theophan Prokopovich**, a man of Protestant inclinations, from the westernized south of the country. This situation of leading Orthodox churchmen, both in Russia and under Turkish domination, being either pro-Roman or pro-Protestant, defending either Latin or reformed positions in theology, piety and church administration, was typical of the time. The living tradition of the Church was lost through historical circumstances. The leaders of the Orthodox Church were forced to choose and defend positions which were alien to the spirit and content of traditional patristic and conciliar Orthodoxy.

Russia: The Petersburg Imperial Era

The decadent period of the Petersburg Imperial Era of Russia which lasted until the twentieth century was a time of spiritual regeneration in the Church. This began with the first rediscovery of traditional Orthodox sources within monastic circles. **Paisii Velichkovskii** (d. 1794), a Moldavian monk, travelled to Mount Athos and returned to Russia with the treasures of the **Philokalia**. The monk translated the anthology into Church Slavonic. From his beginnings, the Russian tradition of spiritual guides called **startsi** or **elders** developed. The most famous blossoming of this development came in the nineteenth century in the **Optina** monastery.

The most famous saint of the Russian Church in the eighteenth century was **Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk** (d. 1783). Tikhon was the ruling bishop of Voronezh who gave up his episcopal office — perhaps as much from despondency and frustration as from ill health — in order to live the monastic life. He was deeply immersed in the holy scriptures and the writings of the church

fathers, particularly Saint John Chrysostom. He knew, as well, the pietist writers of the Christian West. Saint Tikhon wrote many books, including **On True Christianity**, and he had a great correspondence of spiritual direction and pastoral counselling.

The leading Russian hierarch of the century was Metropolitan **Platon of Moscow** (d. 1812), the author of theological textbooks; the promoter of historical studies; and the architect of plans for the return of the Old Believers to communion with the Orthodox Church.

Alaskan Mission

During the eighteenth century Russian missionaries began to move across Siberia. In 1794 monks from the Valaam monastery in Russian Finland arrived on the island of Kodiak in Alaska. In this first missionary party to reach North American shores was **Saint Herman of Alaska**, the first canonized saint of the Orthodox Church in America.

The West

The eighteenth century in the West was a time of revival and missionary expansion. **John and Charles Wesley** (d. 1791 and 1788) began the **Methodist** movement in the Church of England which carried over into the first “**great awakening**” in America. The “awakening” was a revivalist movement dedicated to the breaking down of divisions between the various protestant churches. All protestant believers were called to unity through faith in Jesus as one’s personal Savior. **Jonathan Edwards** (d. 1758) and **George Whitefield** (d. 1770) were the leaders of this revivalist movement in America.

At the same time **deism** was popular in Europe and America. Deism was an outgrowth of the period of the **enlightenment**, and of **romanticism**, which affirmed



the existence of a Supreme Being detached from the world, not self-revealing, and not involved in the affairs of men.

David Hume (d. 1776) in England and **Immanuel Kant** (d. 1804) in Germany developed the philosophy which removed God, freedom, and immortality from the realm of human reason. Thus Christianity was reduced to a religion of personal faith, pietistic devotion, and ethical action.

This enlightenment philosophy was the direct forerunner of the liberal protestant theology of the nineteenth century. This theology was led by its "father," **Frederich Schleiermacher** (d. 1834), who wrote his discourses to the "cultured unbelievers" of the time, calling them to a religion of "feeling" . . . the greatest expression of which was the religion of Jesus.

The most inspiring spiritual achievement of Western Christendom in this century was the music of **J. S. Bach** (d. 1750), **G.F. Handel** (d. 1759), **W.F. Mozart** (d. 1791) and **L. von Beethoven** (d. 1827).

The Roman Church of the eighteenth century experienced both a great missionary expansion and a great conflict with the enlightenment spirit which led to revolution against both church and state in Europe and America. In 1773 the Jesuit order was dissolved by the pope under secular pressures. Many of the Jesuits took refuge in the Russia of **Catherine II the Great**. She was a devotee of the French enlightenment spirit, closing half of the monasteries during her reign. She confiscated all monastic properties, and gravely limited — by administrative and legal measures — the number of monastic vocations in the church.

Nineteenth Century

Russia: Spiritual Renewal

The seeds of spiritual renewal, planted in the previous century, blossomed in Russia. The Church continued to live under the domination of the state. While the Church was subject to strict governmental control and censorship, and while there did not exist a patriarch or church council of any kind during the entire century, the life of faith continued to show itself splendidly in the lives of the Russian saints, missionaries, theologians, and writers of the period.

The greatest Russian saint of the century, who has been called the greatest saint in Russian Church history, was **Saint Seraphim of Sarov** (d. 1833). Saint Seraphim was a monk who spent twenty years in total seclusion in the most intense prayer, fasting, and spiritual exercise. In 1825 he opened the doors of his enclosure, greeting the faithful who came to him with the radiant joy of the resurrected Christ and the Holy Spirit. In his spiritual instructions Saint Seraphim identified the purpose of the Christian life as the “acquisition of the Holy Spirit.” He was canonized in 1903.

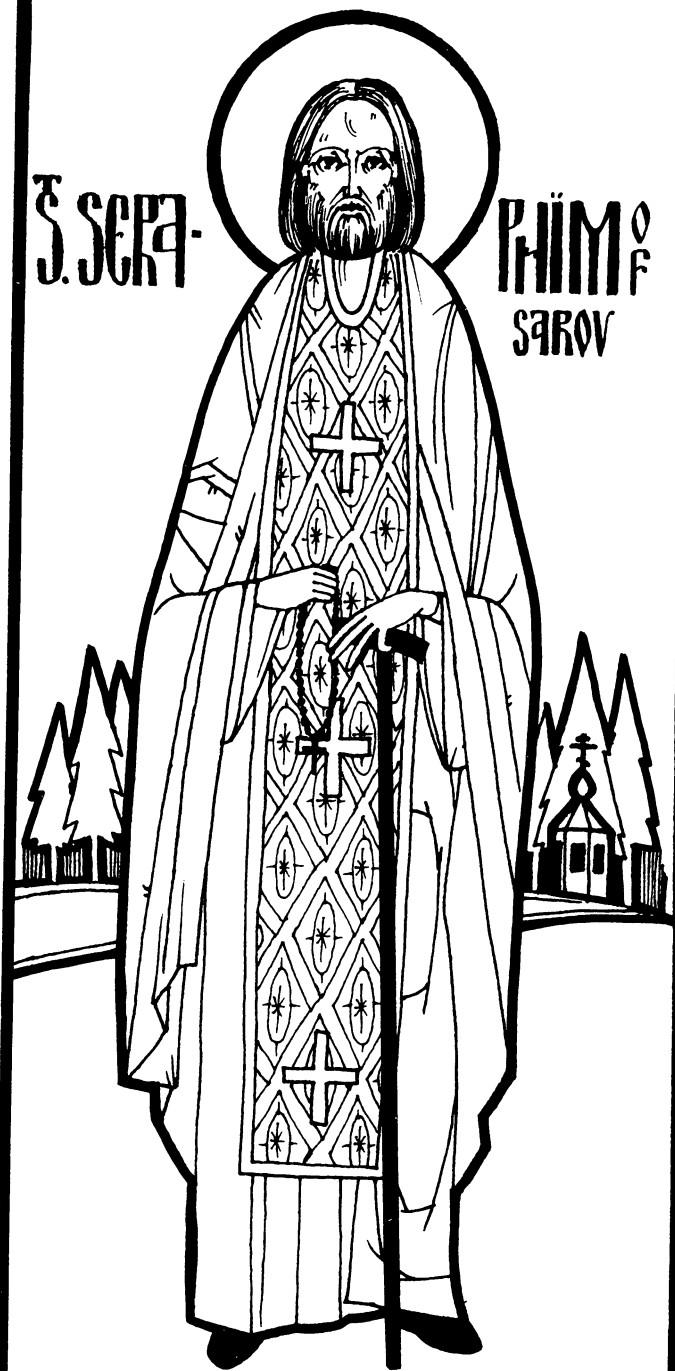
The most famous elders of the **Optina** monastery who lived at this time were: **Leonid** (d. 1841); **Macarius** (d. 1841); and **Amvrossy** (d. 1891). Amvrossy, together with Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk, is considered to be the inspirer of the greatest Christian writer of this time, **Fyodor Dostoevsky** (d. 1861).

Within the movement of spiritual renewal were the teachers of the ascetic life and the practice of the **Jesus Prayer**, the bishop-monks **Ignatii Brianchaninoff** (d. 1867), and **Theophan Govorov, the Recluse** (d. 1894) who wrote volumes of spiritual writings, including the Russian translation of the **Philokalia**. At this time, the popular book on the Jesus Prayer by an unknown Russian author, called **The Way of the Pilgrim**, made its appearance.

In the second half of the century **Father John Sergieff of Kronstadt** (d. 1908) lived and worked. Father John

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was a parish priest whose pastoral gifts earned him the title of "All-Russian Pastor." Through his great faith the saintly priest prayed, celebrated the liturgical mysteries, taught, and healed. He is greatly responsible for the eucharistic revival among Russian Orthodox in this century. He insisted on the participation in the holy sacraments by those who came to pray with him in his parish. In order to facilitate and to deepen the preparation of the faithful for the regular reception of Holy Communion, Father John instituted the practice of corporate, public confession. A great benefactor of the poor and a healer of the sick, Father John's spiritual counsels are published in his diary called **My Life in Christ**.

The leading Russian theologians of the nineteenth century were the great churchmen, **Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow** (d. 1867), and the layman **Alexei Khomiakov** (d. 1860) whose writings — such as the famous **The Church is One** — were not originally published in Russia due to government censorship. Considered as one of the most original and creative of modern theologians, Khomiakov was among the first to discover the traditional patristic courses of Orthodox theology and spiritual life. He encouraged Orthodox thinkers to break from the "Western captivity" of scholastic theology and to meet the intellectual and spiritual world of the West with a sound knowledge and experience of the genuine Orthodox Tradition.

In addition to Khomiakov and the writer **Dostoevsky**, mention must be made of the Russian religious thinkers such as **I. Kireevskii** (d. 1856), **V. Soloviev** (d. 1900), **N. Federov** (d. 1905) and the brothers **S. Troubetskoy** (d. 1905) and **E. Troubetskoy** (d. 1920). Also the name of **Leo Tolstoy** (d. 1913), the great novelist who rewrote the gospels, created his own religion, and was excommunicated from the Orthodox Church, should be mentioned.

Russia: Missionary Activity

The nineteenth century in Russia, as in the West, was a missionary century. The priest, **Makarii Glukharev** (d. 1847), dedicated his life to the evangelization of the Siberian tribes. The lay professor, **Nikolai Ilminskii** (d. 1891) translated the scriptures and church books of the Orthodox faith into the languages of these peoples. The theological academy founded in **Kazan** became the center of the missionary activity of the Russian Church.

At this time as well, **Bishop Nikolai Kassatkin** (d. 1912) of Tokyo converted thousands of Japanese to the Orthodox faith, leaving at his death a self-governing local church with the scriptures and liturgical books in the native language, and a number of native pastors. Bishop Nikolai was canonized a saint in 1970.

Saint Herman of Alaska (d. 1837) was also canonized by the Orthodox Church in 1970 for his extraordinary holiness, expressed by his self-emptying love and care for the Alaskan people. In addition, the name of **Father John Veniaminoff** (d. 1879) must be mentioned in relation to the missionary activities of the Russian Church. Father John travelled across Siberia at the beginning of the century with his wife and children. He translated the scriptures, the church services, and a brief book of his own writing called **The Way to the Kingdom of Heaven**, into the Aleut language. He created the alphabet out of Slavonic characters. Father John was a great administrator, technician, and scientist. He was a teacher, a pastor, and a linguist. In 1839 he became bishop of Kamchatka and the Aleutian Islands. In 1868 he was elected **Metropolitan of Moscow** with the name of **Innocent**. Metropolitan Innocent was canonized as "Enlightener of the Aleuts and Apostle to America" in 1978.

The nineteenth century saw the growth of the Orthodox Church in America. Many immigrants came to the new world in the latter half of the century from the

traditional Orthodox homelands of the old country. In 1812, the first Orthodox church building was constructed on the North American mainland at **Fort Ross** in California. In 1870 the first bishop of Alaska and the Aleutian Islands was named. In 1872 the center of the Orthodox mission was unofficially moved from Sitka to San Francisco, where it was officially established by **Bishop Nestor** in 1879. In 1898 **Archbishop Tikhon Belavin**, later to become the first patriarch of the Russian Church since the time of Peter the Great, was assigned as the American primate. He called for **local autonomy**, the use of **English** as the liturgical language, and the employment of the **local civil calendar** for ecclesiastical use.

The first Greek Orthodox parish in the United States was established in New Orleans, Louisiana, in 1867. This parish was given its churchly vessels by the Russian tsar "in token of his imperial pleasure over the beginning of Greek-speaking churches in the spiritual jurisdiction of the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church of Russia."

The East

The nineteenth century in the East witnessed the independence of large numbers of Orthodox Christians from the Turkish yoke. The Greek uprising in 1821 caused the Turkish authorities to hang **Patriarch Gregory of Constantinople**, and five metropolitans, from the gates of the Phanar on Easter Sunday. After the independence of Greece was won, the autocephalous status of the Greek Church was declared in 1833. It was confirmed by Constantinople in 1850. The patriarchial theological seminary on the island of Halki was founded in 1844.

Five self-governing dioceses of **Serbian** Orthodox and two dioceses of **Romanian** Orthodox were set up outside the boundaries of the Turkish empire during the

course of the century. Within the empire, the **Bulgarian** people sought and obtained permission from the Turks to have their own separate church jurisdiction. The Bulgarians were formerly governed in dioceses with other Orthodox Christians living in the same area by Greek bishops, who were appointed by the patriarch of Constantinople. Any action of establishing a separate church administration on the basis of **nationality** was officially condemned by the patriarchs of Constantinople, Alexandria, and Antioch in 1872 as the heresy of **phyletism**. This so-called **Bulgarian schism** was finally settled in 1945 when the Bulgarian patriarchate was established within determined **territorial** boundaries.

The second half of the century witnessed the life of **Saint Nectarios of Aegina** (d. 1920). He was the **Archbishop of Pentapolis**, known for his evangelical preaching and manner of life — governed by humility, simplicity, poverty, and love for the brethren.

The West

The protestant West was characterized by missionary expansion and liberal theology. This was the era of the “quest for the historical Jesus” through the means of historical and biblical criticism. It was the time when the Christian faith was considered by the theologians, primarily, as a religion of feeling or of moral behavior. At this time, there was a clash between the **liberals** and the **fundamentalists**. The fundamentalists, particularly in America, insisted on using the Bible as a manual of science to be interpreted literally in a manner inconsistent with the purposes and intentions of the holy scriptures as understood and interpreted in Church Tradition. Thus in the Western Protestant world of the nineteenth century, the dominant choice offered was that of either **liberalism** of a rationalist or pietist variety, or sectarian **fundamentalism**. In the

Roman Church at the end of the century, the papal ecclesiastical authority condemned the form of Roman Catholic liberalism called the heresy of **modernism**. This was officially done in 1907. Its roots, however were in the critical, rationalist movements of the nineteenth century with its emphasis on biblical criticism and the history of religions as the proper keys to the understanding of Christianity.

Earlier in the century in 1854, Pope Pius IX, officially promulgated the doctrine of the **Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary**. In 1870, the **First Vatican Council** reaffirmed the doctrines of the Council of Trent, and officially, for the first time in history, defined the dogma of the **infallibility** of the pope of Rome. This dogma declared that when the pope speaks **ex cathedra** on matters of faith or morals, his decision is binding on all catholics — since it is considered to be infallible. The Vatican dogma explicitly states that the infallibility of the pope is binding when he speaks “from himself and not from the consensus of the church.”

The Roman saints, **John Vianney** (d. 1859), the Curé of Ars, and **Teresa of Lisieux** (d. 1897) lived at this time.

The East and the West

In 1848, in response to overtures directed to the Orthodox by Pope Pius IX, the Eastern Patriarchs issued their famous encyclical letter in which the doctrine of the conciliar character of the Orthodox is clearly professed. Signed by all the patriarchs of the Orthodox Church, together with twenty-nine bishops fully endorsed by Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow, the encyclical letter of 1848 is held as the most authoritative document in modern Orthodox Church history.

Twentieth Century 1900 - 1925

American Archdiocese

In 1898, **Bishop Tikhon Belavin** became the head of the diocese of the Aleutian Islands and Alaska of the Russian Orthodox Church. In 1900, the name of this diocese was changed to the diocese of the **Aleutian Islands and North America**. In 1905, the Holy Synod of the Russian Church elevated the diocese to the rank of archdiocese and Tikhon became an archbishop. During this same year, the center of the American archdiocese was moved from San Francisco to New York City where the **St. Nicholas Cathedral** was built. At this time also, the first ecclesiastical **seminary** was founded in Minneapolis and the **first general council** (sobor) of the archdiocese took place in 1907 in Mayfield, Pennsylvania, near **St. Tikhon's Monastery** in South Canaan where the archbishop had also founded a pastoral school for training priests.

Archbishop Tikhon

The Church in America during the time of Archbishop Tikhon, who remained its leader until 1908, was comprised of all Orthodox Christians living in the new world, from all national backgrounds. Many of the Slavs in the archdiocese were former uniates, i.e., members of the Roman Catholic church of the Eastern rite who came to America from those sections of Eastern Europe where the Union of Brest was still in force. (See above page 184) Many of these Slav Christians were led back into the Orthodox Church by **Father Alexis Toth** (d. 1909), who, in 1891, joined the Orthodox Church with his parish in Minneapolis.

Archbishop Tikhon had great ideas for the Orthodox Church in America. He wrote to the Holy Synod of the Russian Church in 1905-1906 that the American archdiocese should be an autonomous Orthodox Church made up of all Orthodox Christians of all nationalities, using the English language and the American civil calendar (i.e., the Gregorian calendar) for its church services and activities. English trans-



lations of the main liturgical services of the Church had already been done at this time.

It was Tikhon's conviction that the American Church would be composed of many national groups and he himself had a plan for the gradual development of the self-governing church with a hierarchy drawn from all of the ethnic Orthodox peoples. In 1904, **Raphael Hawaweeny**, a Syrian archimandrite, was consecrated as bishop of Brooklyn to care for the faithful of Syrian and Lebanese origins in America. A similar plan was set for the consecration of a bishop from the Serbian clergy, who also would have a territorial diocese while tending to the specific needs of the Serbian Orthodox in the new land. Thus it was the consciously formulated plan to develop a local hierarchy, preserving the Orthodox territorial principle of diocesan government, and yet serving the pastoral needs of the various national peoples. Already in 1905, however, a "**Hellenic Eastern Orthodox Church**" was incorporated in the state of New York independent of the local Orthodox hierarchy, although, at the time, there was no Greek bishop in the country and no plans for a specifically Greek-American diocese.

From 1908 - 1917

After Archbishop Tikhon returned to Russia, the American diocese was headed by **Archbishop Platon Rozhdestvenskii** who served until 1914 when he returned to Russia to serve as a member of the Holy Synod under the provisional government. Platon was the former exarch of the Church of Georgia (Iberia) in the Russian empire. In 1912, the ecclesiastical seminary, called **St. Platon's**, was moved from Minneapolis to Tenafly, New Jersey.

Father Leonid Turkevich, the future **Metropolitan Leonty**, one of the original teachers at the seminary, became, at this time, the dean of St. Nicholas

Cathedral in New York. He wrote many articles during this period about the destiny of the American missionary archdiocese to become a self-governing Orthodox Church. With **Father A. Kukulevsky**, he represented the American diocese at the Russian Church Council of 1917-1918.

Church in Russia

The period from 1900 to 1917, in Russia, was a time of religious rebirth and ecclesiastical reform. While such atheist intellectuals as **P.B. Struve** (d. 1944), **S.N. Bulgakov** (d. 1944), **N.A. Berdyaev** (d. 1948), **S.L. Frank** (d. 1950), **G.P. Fedotov** (d. 1951) and others were effecting their conversions "from marxism to idealism" and into the Orthodox Church, the bishops and leaders of the Russian Church were subjecting the ecclesiastical structures to critical review. In 1905, the ober-procurator of the Holy Synod, **K. P. Pobedonostsev**, who had virtually ruled the church for a quarter century, made known the emperor's declaration that at long last a council of the Russian Church would be held and that plans should be made "to carry this great task forward." The civil power finally yielded to the demands that the Russian Church be free to carry on its life and work without interference from state control.

Council of 1917 - 1918

Much pre-conciliar work was done. Surveys of the bishops were conducted to receive their ideas. Discussions were held. Reports were filed. After much debate, it was decided that each diocese would send delegates from the clergy and laity to sit in council with the bishops, who, alone, according to the Orthodox Faith, would make the final decisions in matters of church doctrine and practice. In 1917, in the midst of revolutionary turmoil, the council convened. Its most momentous act was to restore the patriarchate to the

Russian Church. On the morning of November 1, 1917, after vigil and prayer, an old monk drew the name of one of the three elected nominees from an urn in front of the icon of the Kazan Mother of God. Thus, **Archbishop Tikhon**, the former primate of the American archdiocese, became the first **patriarch** of the Russian Orthodox Church since the time of Peter the Great.

Patriarch Tikhon

From the very beginning, the new patriarch struggled for the rights of the Russian Church in its new situation of legal separation from the soviet state. In January 1918, he issued a formal decree of condemnation and excommunication of all "open and secret enemies of the truth of Christ." This decree, which referred directly to actions of the Bolshevik government, was confirmed by the church council which was still in session.

Patriarch Tikhon was also arrested and brought to trial for his refusal to give up consecrated church vessels which the government demanded during the time of famine and civil war, ostensibly to feed the poor. The primate offered all unconsecrated riches of the church and promised as well to raise money for the afflicted through free will offerings of the faithful that would equal the amount which the government was demanding, and which also would be distributed to the people directly by the church.

In his struggles and trials, the patriarch tried to follow the path of political neutrality while he defended the rights of the church without compromise. He died in 1925 as a confessor for the faith and is recognized by many as a martyr and saint.

Living Church

Patriarch Tikhon also had to struggle against the **Living Church**, a group of ultra-liberal churchmen who

enthusiastically supported the soviet regime. The Living Church was recognized by the state as the official Russian Church, and it was used by the state against those faithful to Patriarch Tikhon. This group of "renovationists" in many ways changed the teachings and practices of the Orthodox Church and were greeted by some in the West as the bearers of the Reformation in Russia. The Living Church died out in the late twenties when it was no longer useful to the state. It had no following among the people, and a number of clergy who had been in the movement in good faith repented and returned to the Orthodox Church.

Ukrainian Self-consecrated

In 1921, in Kiev, a concil of Ukrainian priests was held to form an autocephalous church for the Ukraine. At this meeting, at which no bishops were present, the priests "consecrated" their leader, **Basil Lipkivskii**, as a "bishop." Thus began the group of "self-consecrated" called the **Autocephalous Ukrainian Orthodox Church**, which has since spread throughout the world.

Church in America

Following the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, the Orthodox Church in America was thrown into confusion and chaos. Since 1917, the American archdiocese was without effective leadership. After the revolution, **Archbishop Platon** returned to America. He had the blessing of Patriarch Tikhon to care for the American church, but was without official papers of any kind. The **third council** of the American archdiocese, held in Pittsburgh in 1922, accepted Platon as its leader, but agreed to wait for official word from the patriarch in Moscow as to his official assignment. At the time, however, the patriarch was in captivity to the soviet regime and the official support of the state was given to the Living Church.

In 1923, the unfrocked priest, **John Kedrovsky**, came to America as a “bishop” of the Living Church and demanded — and received by legal action — possession of Russian Church properties including St. Nicholas Cathedral in New York. At this time as well, the seminary in Tenaflly was closed and its properties and library were sold.

Detroit Council

In 1924, the **fourth council** of the American archdiocese was held in Detroit. This council, on the basis of Patriarch Tikhon’s decree of November 20, 1920, No. 362 — which declared that all dioceses of the Russian Church cut off from the patriarchate should govern themselves and carry on their church life under local supervision — declared that the American archdiocese would be a **self-governing metropolitanate** until such time as normal relations could be resumed with the Church in Russia. Platon was officially installed as the metropolitan and the church came to be called the **American Metropolia**, officially incorporated as the **Russian Orthodox Greek Catholic Church of America**.

American Disunity

The chaos of the post-revolutionary years gave opportunity for the non-Russian Orthodox in America to form their own ecclesiastical jurisdictions, thus inaugurating the existence of many church “dioceses” in the same territory for the first time in Orthodox Church history. In 1922, the patriarchate of Constantinople settled its problems with the Church of Greece over America and officially formed the **Greek Orthodox Church in America** under its jurisdiction. The Syrian bishop Raphael died in 1915 and the new bishop for the **Syrian Orthodox in America**, **Aftimios**, was consecrated in America in union with the local Russian bishops. At this time as well, local groups of

Orthodox Christians from all national backgrounds were organizing themselves into parish communities in the new world with virtually no clear and consistent hierarchal leadership.

Church in Greece

In Greece, the first quarter of the century saw the influx of many Greeks from the Turkish territories, particularly at the time of the Greek-Turkish war of 1922 when the patriarchate of Constantinople lost a vast number of members who emigrated to other places, including the new world. In 1911, **Father Eusebios Matthopoulos** founded the brotherhood **Zoe** in Greece, an organization dedicated to the enlightenment of Christian Greece. The brotherhood founded many schools and unions and did much good work. It also brought many protestant doctrines, practices and pieties into the church.

Other Churches

In 1920, the five dioceses of Serbian Orthodox which had come into being during the time of the breakdown of the Turkish empire and the formation of the new European nations were formed into one national **Serbian Orthodox Church** with a patriarch in Belgrade. In 1922, this church was officially separated from the state.

The **Roumanian Orthodox Church** with its patriarch in Bucharest, was established in 1925. It remains the national church of Roumania.

The **Antiochene Patriarchate** in the middle east received its first Arab primate in 1898, not without the aid of the Russians. The **Patriarchate in Jerusalem**, however, continues to have a Greek primate, although a council of Arab priests and laymen was formed in 1911 to participate in church government.

The **Orthodox Church in Poland** received autocephaly in 1924. By 1925, there were also two dioceses of

Orthodox Christians in **Czechoslovakia**. The **Orthodox Church of Finland** has become autonomous under the guidance of the Patriarchate of Constantinople in 1923.

In 1921, the exarchate of the **Russian Orthodox Church in Western Europe** was led by **Metropolitan Eulogius Georgievskii** (d. 1946) who was appointed by Patriarch Tikhon. The Patriarchate of Constantinople appointed a Greek exarch in London in 1922.

Synod in Exile

Immediately following the Bolshevik Revolution, a group of Russian émigré churchmen, together with leading monarchist laymen, formed themselves into the **Russian Orthodox Synod in Exile**, also called the **Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia**. This group, led by **Metropolitan Antony Khrapovitskii** (d. 1936), finally established its center in Serbia where it received the right to function independently of the local ecclesiastical hierarchy. Because of its location in Sremski-Karlovtzy, the group also received the name of the **Karlovatskii Synod**. This group was officially condemned by Patriarch Tikhon, as well as the Patriarchate of Constantinople, for disturbing church order.

Ecumenical Movement

The movement for cooperation among Christians, which began among the protestants in the nineteenth century, developed more strongly in the first quarter of this century with the establishment of the **International Missionary Council** in Edinburgh in 1910. In 1920, the bishops of the Patriarchate of Constantinople issued an encyclical letter "**Unto All Churches of Christ Wheresoever They Be**," calling for "a closer relationship and a mutual understanding among the several Christian churches."

1925 - 1950

Church in Russia

At the death of Patriarch Tikhon, the Church in Russia entered its darkest hour. **Metropolitan Sergius Stragorodskii** served as “deputy locum tenens” of the patriarchate from 1927 to 1943. This was the time of Stalin’s purges when literally millions of people, including thousands of clergy, were imprisoned, exiled and killed. The Stalin constitution of 1936 officially called for “freedom of religion and freedom of anti-religious propaganda.” Hundreds of churches, monasteries and schools were closed. What little church life remained was limited exclusively to liturgical services. The persecution of the church by the state was fierce and relentless.

Relative Freedom

A period of relative freedom came to the Russian Church during the Second World War. The government needed church support for the war effort. In return for rallying the people to fight for the fatherland, the Russian Church received concessions from the state. Many churches, monasteries and schools were reopened. In 1943, a church council officially elected **Sergius** as patriarch. Until his death in 1945, **Metropolitan Alexei Simanskii** was elected to replace him at a second council solemnly conducted in the presence of a host of foreign church dignitaries.

Russian Émigré Disunity

In 1926, Metropolitan Platon of the American Metropolia met with members of the Russian Synod in Exile to discuss the problems of caring for the Russian Orthodox Christians in diaspora. At this time, many Russian immigrants had come to America and joined the American Metropolia and, due to the circumstances, the feelings of Russian nationalism in the American archdiocese were high. When the Synod in Exile attempted to extend its jurisdiction over the American Metropolia, however, Metropolitan Platon

objected. Thus, he and his church were “suspended” by the Synod in Exile, which by now had developed the position of considering itself to be the one true Russian Orthodox Church, the successor of the Church of Patriarch Tikhon. At this same time, **Metropolitan Eulogius** also met with the bishops of the Synod and likewise was “suspended” by them for refusing to recognize their assumed jurisdiction over all Russian Orthodox outside of Russia.

Moscow Pressure

In the nineteen-thirties, pressure was also applied to the American Metropolia and the Western European Exarchate by Moscow. **Archbishop Benjamin Fedchenkoff** came to America from the USSR demanding the Metropolia’s allegiance to the Moscow Patriarchate. The fact that a pledge of allegiance to the Soviet state was also demanded showed that the Russian church was not free and that the American Metropolia could in no way enter into normal relations with it. Thus, in 1934, the Russian Church officially declared the Metropolia to be illegal and opened the Exarchate of the Moscow Patriarchate in America. In the same year, Metropolitan Platon died and **Archbishop Theophilus Pashkovsky** was elected primate at the **fifth council** of the American church in Pittsburgh.

American Destiny

In 1937, the **sixth council** of the American Metropolia in New York affirmed a “moral” relation with the Russian Synod in Exile, but when the Synod once more demanded to govern the American church, the “moral” relationship was broken. This sobor also blessed the establishment of **St. Vladimir’s Seminary** in New York City as a graduate school of Orthodox theology, and **St. Tikhon’s Seminary** as a pastoral school at St. Tikhon’s Monastery in South Canaan, Pennsylvania. Both schools opened in 1938.

In 1945, the **seventh council** of the American Metropolia in Cleveland decided upon close “spiritual” relations with the Moscow Patriarchate, but when, once again, demands were made from Moscow for loyalty to the Soviet government, the “spiritual” relationship was not realized.

In 1950, upon the death of Metropolitan Theophilus, the **eighth council** of the American Metropolia in New York elected as primate **Archbishop Leonty Turkevich**, one of the original leaders of the American missionary diocese. (See above page 208) By this time, the Synod in Exile had set up its center in America, and the Moscow Patriarchate was applying its strongest pressures for the reestablishment of jurisdiction over the Russian-American church which it continued to call “illegal.” Thus, at this eighth council, before his election as metropolitan, Archbishop Leonty made a speech reaffirming the specifically American destiny of the church which had been planted in the new world by the Church of Russia more than a century and a half earlier: “We will follow our line,” the archbishop declared, “the foundation of an administratively self-governing Orthodox Church in America.”

Western Europe

During this same period, the Moscow Patriarchate also demanded a pledge of loyalty to the soviet regime from the Russian Church in Western Europe. Metropolitan Eulogius refused to comply, and appealed to Constantinople. Thus, in 1931, the Russian Church in Western Europe became an exarchate of the Patriarchate of Constantinople. Many famous Russian churchmen and theologians were in the exarchate of Metropolitan Eulogius who, in 1925, founded the **Orthodox Theological Institute** in Paris, called by the name of **St. Sergius**. The theological institute became the center of Orthodox learning in the West where such men were

gathered as **Fr. S. Bulgakov** (d. 1944), **Fr. V. Zenkovsky** (d. 1962), **Bishop Kassian Bezobrazov** (d. 1965), **Archimandrite Cyprian Kern** (d. 1960), **Fr. N. Afanasiev** (d. 1966), **Fr. G. Florovsky**, who later became dean of St. Vladimir's Seminary in New York and taught at Holy Cross Theological School in Brookline, and **Prof. A. Katashev** (d. 1960), the last procurator of the Holy Synod of the Russian Church and the first Minister of Religion of the Provisional Government who served as secretary of the Russian Church Council of 1917-1918.

Mention also must be made of the pastors **Fr. A. Elchaninoff** (d. 1934) and **Fr. S. Chetverikoff** (d. 1947) who, together with many of the professors of St. Sergius, worked closely with the **Russian Student Christian Movement**, which did a great work among Russian émigrés during this period.

American Jurisdictions

The second quarter of this century was a time of increasing Orthodox ecclesiastical jurisdictions in America. The controversy over the Greek Orthodox in America between the Church of Greece and the Ecumenical Patriarchate was finally solved, with the American archdiocese being, according to its by-laws of 1930, a Greek Church for Greek-speaking Orthodox Christians under the jurisdiction of Constantinople.

In 1937, **Archbishop Athenagoras Spyrou**, the future ecumenical patriarch, came from the old world to head the American archdiocese. In the same year, the **Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Theological School**, which later moved to Brookline, Massachusetts, was opened in Pomfret, Connecticut. Athenagoras served in America until his installation as patriarch of Constantinople in 1949. He was replaced by **Archbishop Michael Konstantinides**.

In 1933, the **Antiochene** diocese, which had been led by **Bishop Aftimios**, split into two groups. In 1936, **Metropolitan Antony Bashir** became the leader of the larger group, while **Archbishop Samuel David** led the smaller group. Both dioceses were in the jurisdiction of the Antiochene patriarchate. **Metropolitan Antony** was one of the outstanding hierarchs in American church history. He was ordained a priest in 1922 and served as a missionary among Syrian Orthodox Christians for fourteen years until he was made the Metropolitan of the Antiochene Orthodox Archdiocese which, since 1925, was officially separated from the Russian mission. He was a pioneer in encouraging the use of English in liturgical worship and was an outspoken supporter of jurisdictional unity among all Orthodox in the new world. He was a founder and leading member of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (see below) and was also a leader in Orthodox ecumenical activity.

A **Roumanian** diocese was formed in America in 1929 headed by **Bishop Polycarp**. After 1935, there was no bishop in America for this group. After the war, a great period of disorder reigned, during which time one group of Roumanian Orthodox in America was led by **Bishop Valerian Trifa**, whose episcopal consecration was judged irregular, and another group was formed under the jurisdiction of Bucharest.

During the same period, a **Serbian** diocese was formed in America led by **Bishop Dionisiye** under the jurisdiction of the Belgrade patriarchate, and a **Bulgarian** diocese was also established led by **Metropolitan Andrey** in connection with the national Orthodox church in Bulgaria which was officially established in 1945.

An **Albanian** Orthodox diocese was founded in America by **Bishop Fan Noli**, who was consecrated by

bishops of the Russian-American Metropolia, while another small group of Albanians was formed under the jurisdiction of Constantinople. During this time, the **Albanian Church** in the homeland, which was declared autocephalous in 1937, underwent grave persecutions.

In 1939, the patriarchate of Constantinople consecrated **Bishop Orestes Chornock** as head of the **American Carpatho-Russian** diocese composed of former uniate priests and people. At this same time, Constantinople also established a **Ukrainian Orthodox** jurisdiction in America led by **Bishop Bohdan Shpilka**. Another Ukrainian jurisdiction found its place in America also at this time, led by **Archbishop Palladios**, formerly of the Church of Poland. During this time, the Ukrainian "self-consecrated" church also established jurisdiction in the new world. Its leader in the United States was **Metropolitan John Theodorovich**. It was being argued by this group, during this period, that its situation had been "regularized" in various ways, but it continued to be denied recognition by the Orthodox churches.

Ecumenical Movement

In 1948, the **World Council of Churches** was formed in Amsterdam from the **Faith and Order** and **Life and Work** movements which had been meeting in the twenties and thirties. By the time of its second assembly in Evanston, Illinois, in 1954, the patriarchates of Constantinople, Alexandria and Antioch, the Church of Greece, the Russian American-Metropolia and the Roumanian Episcopate in America had become official members of the WCC. During this period, the leaders of the Russian Exarchate in Western Europe, as well as certain Russians who remained faithful to Moscow, such as **Vladimir Lossky** (d. 1958) and **Nicholas Zernov**, also played a major role in ecumenical activity.

1950 - 1979

Church in Russia

In the late fifties and early sixties, the soviet state again began to persecute the Orthodox Church in Russia. There were no violent purges as in the Stalin era, but the new persecutions came in the form of “administrative” measures with supposedly legal foundations. There was the closing of schools and churches — from 22,000 churches open in 1960 to 7,000 in 1964. There was the heavy taxation and restricted registration of clergy. Severe punishments were meted out against churchmen for trivial or non-existent “crimes.” In 1961, new decrees of the government gravely limited the powers of the parish priests by giving all legal and administrative authority in the churches to the lay councils, the “twenty members required by soviet law for the formation of a local corporation with rights to use a church building for worship. The pastors were thus reduced to mere liturgical functionaries devoid of official involvement in the life of their churches. These “administrative” measures were the attempt to destroy the religious faith which according to marxist doctrine, should long since have died a natural death in the USSR. Official atheist propaganda of the period shows a grave concern over the persistence of religion in the land.

Churchmen Appeal

Because the leading members of the hierarchy of the Russian Church were silent and passive in the face of the new persecution of the church by the state, voices of protest arose from the church members. The most powerful appeals for just and proper action concerning the church came from **Archbishop Yermogen of Kaluga** and the priests, **Nikolai Eshliman** and **Gleb Yakunin**. These spokesmen in behalf of the rights of the Russian Church — on the basis of soviet law as well as the statutes of the Russian Orthodox Church promulgated at its council of 1945 — sent open letters of criticism to both church and state officials in

December 1965. They, together with a number of lesser known colleagues, were deprived of their churchly positions. Agitation among the clergy and laymen for reform in the Russian Church, for strong leadership and just treatment, goes on until today.

Pasternak and Solzhenitsyn

In addition to churchmen, men from academic and literary fields also made appeals in the name of faith and freedom in Russia. **Boris Pasternak** (d. 1960) and **Alexander Solzhenitsyn**, both Nobel Prize winning authors and Christian believers, are in this number. Solzhenitsyn addressed his famous **Lenten Letter** to Patriarch Pimen in 1972. This letter was extremely critical of the policies and actions of the Russian Church in the face of state control. It received great international attention as well as causing much controversy within the Russian Church. It received, however, no official response from the Moscow Patriarchate.

Patriarch Pimen

Upon the death of Patriarch Alexei in 1970, **Archbishop Pimen Izvekov** was chosen as primate of the Russian Church at its council in 1971. This same council officially confirmed the administrative decrees of 1961 so opposed by the parish clergy. Patriarch Pimen, who has made visits to the other patriarchates since his elevation, has been silent in response to all criticism of church leadership in Russia, and has continued the policies of cooperation with the soviet authorities of Sergius and Alexei before him.

Japanese Autonomy

Among the last acts of Patriarch Alexei in 1970 was the official declaration by the Moscow Patriarchate of the autonomy of the **Orthodox Church in Japan**. **Bishop**

Vladimir Nagosky, the American-born primate of the Japanese Church, which was affiliated with the American Metropolia since World War II, was made Metropolitan of Tokyo as the church became fully self-governing. The Moscow Patriarch reserved the right to confirm the election of the Japanese primate and to participate in his consecration. In all other respects, the Church in Japan is fully independent. At the time of Japanese autonomy, the founder of the Church in Japan, **Archbishop Nikolai Kassatkin**, was canonized a saint by the Russian Church. In 1972, **Metropolitan Vladimir** returned to the United States as the native **Metropolitan Theodosius Nagashima** replaced him as primate of the church.

Metropolia Development

The fifties and sixties in the American Metropolia were difficult years. The problems of this period were internal difficulties arising from the theological and spiritual development of the church and the desire for a more adequate churchly life. There was an eagerness for administrative and liturgical reform that generally took the form of clergy-laity struggles over respective rights and privileges. By the end of the sixties, however, a consensus was developing among the majority of priests and people in the church for the implementation of proper liturgical worship, administrative order and spiritual development in the metropolia. The theological schools by this time were firmly established. **St. Tikhon's Seminary** had developed considerably. **St. Vladimir's** had received a number of famous European professors — N. Arseniev, A. Bogolepov, G. Fedotov, Fr. G. Florovsky, S. Verhovskoy, Fr. A. Schmemmann, Fr. J. Meyendorff — and, in 1967, received the right from the State of New York to grant the degrees of bachelor and master of theology.

Metropolitan Ireney

Metropolitan Leonty died in May of 1965. At the **twelfth council** of the American metropolia, the assembly nominated **Archbishop Ireney Bekish**, the acting administrator, and the American-born **Bishop Vladimir Nagosky** of the Japanese Church as candidates for the office of Metropolitan, as no candidate polled the required two-thirds votes on the first ballot. **Archbishop Ireney** was subsequently elected by the Synod of Bishops to succeed Metropolitan Leonty.

Metropolitan Ireney immediately addressed a letter to the primates of all autocephalous churches upon his elevation, urging an urgent discussion about the confused situation of Orthodoxy in America. His appeal at this time went unanswered. His requests of leading patriarchs for audiences to discuss the Church in America were refused.

Metropolitan Ireney presided at the **thirteenth council** of the American metropolia in 1967 as the feeling ran high for action to declare the metropolia as the self-governing Orthodox Church in America without recourse to or recognition by any patriarchate across the seas. Although no official action was taken, a “**straw vote**” of the council showed the overwhelming majority of delegates ready to drop the name **Russian** from the church and to carry on officially as a church in and for America.

American Autocephaly

In the late sixties, informal talks began between representatives of the Moscow Patriarchate and the American Metropolia, usually at ecumenical gatherings, about the American problem. Official negotiations to settle the difficulties between the two churches began in 1969. The official delegates of the American metropolia — Archbishop Kiprian of Philadelphia, and Fathers Joseph Pishtey, John Skvir, Alexander Schmemmann and John Meyendorff — insisted upon a

totally self-governing status for the metropolia, with the complete removal of all ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Russian Church from American territory.

After long and difficult negotiations, with many hesitations and compromises, and many meetings and discussions within both churches over this complex and sensitive issue, on **March 31, 1970, Metropolitan Ireney and Metropolitan Nikodim**, head of the external affairs department of the Moscow Patriarchate, signed the agreement whereby the Russian Church would recognize the American metropolia as the fully autocephalous **Orthodox Church in America**.

Autocephaly Proclaimed

On **April 10, 1970**, six days before his death, Patriarch Alexei, together with fourteen bishops of the holy synod of the Russian Church, signed the official tomos proclaiming the metropolia as the fifteenth autocephalous church in the Orthodox family of self-governing churches, the **Orthodox Church in America**.

At the **fourteenth council** of the American metropolia held at **St. Tikhon's Monastery** on October 20-22, 1970, the tomos of autocephaly — which had been formally received on behalf of the American church by a delegation of churchmen led by **Bishop Theodosius Lazor of Sitka** — was officially read and the event was solemnly celebrated. The new status of the church was accepted and affirmed by the members of the council by a vote of 301 to 7, with 2 abstentions. The council thus became the **first general council** of the autocephalous Orthodox Church in America.

The **second council** of the Church, held at St. Tikhon's adopted the official governing statute of the new church and officially accepted the Albanian diocese headed by **Bishop Stephen Lasko** into the Orthodox Church in America.

Canonization of St. Herman

On August 9, 1972, the Orthodox Church in America celebrated the canonization of its first saint, **Father Herman of Alaska**. A member of the first group of missionary monks to come to Alaska in 1794 from the Valaam monastery in Finland, Saint Herman, a simple lay monk, remained among the Alaskan people as their protector, teacher and intercessor before God. The canonization ceremonies, attended by **Archbishop Paaveli** of the Finnish Orthodox Church, took place in Kodiak.

Autocephaly Aftermath

The act of recognition by the Moscow Patriarchate of its former missionary diocese in the new world as the fifteenth autocephalous Orthodox Church has not been officially received by all of the churches. Only the churches of Bulgaria, Poland, Czechoslovakia and Finland have issued official statements of recognition. Violent opposition has come from the Patriarchate of Constantinople, its American-Greek Orthodox archdiocese, and other Greek-speaking churches. All churches, however, including the Patriarchate of Constantinople, are in full sacramental and spiritual communion with the Orthodox Church in America, thus giving it the recognition **de facto**, which, for various reasons, they have refused to offer **de jure**.

Ecumenical Patriarchate

The ecumenical patriarchate of Constantinople from 1950 to 1972 was led by the imposing figure of **Patriarch Athenagoras I**. This world-famous hierarch was concerned primarily with the survival of the patriarchate in Turkey and with ecumenical activity. In January 1964, the patriarch met with **Pope Paul VI** of the Roman Church in Jerusalem, the first meeting between the primates of the Orthodox and Roman churches since 1439. The two prelates met again in 1967 in Constantinople and in Rome. In 1965, they issued

statements nullifying the anathemas of 1054 (see above), thus signifying an era of friendship between the churches in the mutual quest for complete unity in truth and love. The patriarch also met personally with leaders of the Church of England and the World Council of Churches.

Athenagoras Criticized

For his bold words and deeds directed toward Christian unity — particularly in his relations with the Roman Church — Patriarch Athenagoras was both admired and attacked. While being virtually identified with the whole of Orthodoxy in the minds of most non-Orthodox, the patriarch was severely criticized by some members of the Orthodox Church for acting independently and irresponsibly, without proper consultation with the leaders of all of the Orthodox churches. Others in the church, primarily in the Church of Greece, on Mt. Athos, and in America, criticized not merely the manner of the patriarch's acting, but the actions themselves as betraying the Orthodox Faith.

Great Council

In 1961, Athenagoras I called the first conference of representatives of all autocephalous Orthodox churches in **Rhodes** to discuss the common problems facing the Orthodox, and to begin serious preparations for the calling of a **Great Council** of the Orthodox Church which had already been discussed for decades. Several other meetings were held in Rhodes and Switzerland, but the convocation of such a Great Council of all Orthodox bishops in the world in the near future is most unlikely. In 1967, the ecumenical patriarchate refused to place the problem of the Orthodox jurisdictions in America on the agenda of the pan-Orthodox conference held that year in Switzerland. The request was made by the **Standing**

Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in America. (See below)

Inner Troubles

The ecumenical patriarchate continues to have trouble with the Turkish government. The hasty election of **Patriarch Demetrios I, Papadopoulos**, to succeed Athenagoras I in 1972 showed the power of the Turkish authorities over the affairs of the Orthodox Church within its territory. The patriarchal seminary on the island of **Halki** was closed because of Turkish regulations in 1971. The ecumenical patriarchate also is engaged in controversy with the Church of Greece over the jurisdiction of dioceses in the “new lands” of northern Greece, while the monks of Mount Athos — whose number reduced from about six and a half thousand at the beginning of the century to about one and a half thousand today — continue to rebel against Constantinopolitan leadership because of its ecumenical policies.

Church in Greece

The Church of Greece has had its own inner turmoils since the time of the civil war in the forties. The coup of the military junta in 1967, as well as its subsequent overthrow, have brought turmoil in church affairs, particularly on the hierarchical level.

Greek Archdiocese

The ecumenical patriarchate continues its jurisdiction over the Greek Orthodox Church in America. In 1959, Constantinople appointed **Archbishop Iakovos Koukouzis** to succeed the late Archbishop Michael. By his active participation in national life, be it in presidential inaugurations or in freedom marches in the South, the new primate quickly became a widely recognized spokesman for Orthodoxy in America. At the same

time, he has continued the policies of his predecessors in America, Athenagoras (later Patriarch of Constantinople) and Michael, giving to his archdiocese a highly centralized administrative system and a pronounced Greek character. Perhaps inevitably, Archbishop Iakovos has been criticized from many directions. Some have regarded him as inconsistent in his position toward Orthodox unity in the New World, while a number within his own archdiocese — particularly recent immigrants — have attacked him for what they consider his pro-American, anti-Greek actions.

SCOBA

In March of 1960, Archbishop Iakovos hosted a meeting of the primates of all canonical Orthodox jurisdictions in the United States to discuss their closer cooperation. On June 7 in the same year, the **Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas** was established. Although a consultative group with no canonical jurisdiction or authority, SCOBA has provided a symbol of Orthodox unity in the new world, and has given a structure for the coordination of inter-Orthodox activities. The most fruitful of the projects carried on under the official auspices of SCOBA are the **Campus Commission** for work among students, and the **Orthodox Christian Education Commission**, the outgrowth of inter-Orthodox action in the area of religious education which began in 1957 under the leadership of **Sophie Koulomzin**. The OCEC produces a complete curriculum of materials for Orthodox Church schools.

SCOBA continues to exist today, although the presence of the autocephalous Orthodox Church in America has forced it to reconsider its structure and policies. Though it has failed to resolve the canonical problems caused by the existence of many overlapping Orthodox jurisdictions in the Americas, SCOBA

continues, under the chairmanship of Archbishop Iakovos, as a coordinating agency and a platform for discussion among the Orthodox.

National Dioceses

The **Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese** in America elected **Metropolitan Philip Saliba** as its primate in 1966 upon the death of Metropolitan Antony Bashir. The small diocese of Toledo, headed by **Metropolitan Michael Shaheen**, continued its separate existence under the patriarchate of Antioch until 1977, when its longstanding differences with the Antiochian Archdiocese were resolved.

The **Serbians** in America split in 1963 when the Church in Serbia retired **Bishop Dionisiye** and replaced him with **Bishops Sava, Firmilian** and **Gregory** for three American dioceses. Bishop Dionisiye rejected his retirement and was unfrocked by the church authorities. He led a large group of clergy and people into his independent Serbian Church in America. Although the most violent period of strife between the two Serbian groups is over, the Dionisiye group remains outside of canonical relationship with the Orthodox churches while the patriarchate in Belgrade led by **Patriarch German** since 1958 continues to govern the three American dioceses.

The small **Bulgarian** diocese in American also split during this period, with some members remaining faithful to the patriarchate in Sophia — with **Patriarch Maxim** replacing the late Patriarch Cyril in 1971 — while the others first formed their own independent group and later, in December 1976, entered into the Orthodox Church in America.

A small **Roumanian** diocese in America remains in the jurisdiction of the Roumanian Church headed by **Patriarch Justin**, while the Patriarchate of Constantinople continues to exercise jurisdiction over **Alba-**

nian, Carpatho-Russian and Ukrainian jurisdictions in America.

OCA Additions

The **Roumanian** episcopate in America, headed by **Bishop Valerian Trifa**, officially affiliated with the American Metropolia in 1960 and thus is an integral part of the autocephalous Orthodox Church in America.

Under the leadership of the late Bishop Stephen Lasko, the **Albanian** diocese, originally formed by Bishop Fan Noli, joined the Orthodox Church in America in 1971.

The Orthodox Church in America opened its twenty-thousand member **Mexican** exarchate in 1972, headed by **Bishop Jose Cortes y Olmos**.

At the Fifth All-American Council, held in Montreal, Canada, in October 1977, Metropolitan Ireney, due to reasons of health, resigned as Primate of the Orthodox Church in America. As no candidate for the office of Metropolitan received the necessary two-thirds vote for election on the first ballot, the assembly nominated two American-born bishops as candidates: **Bishop Dmitri Royster** of the Diocese of Hartford and New England, and **Bishop Theodosius Lazor** of the Diocese of Pittsburgh and West Virginia. Bishop Theodosius was subsequently elected by the Synod of Bishops to succeed Metropolitan Ireney as ruling hierarch, thus becoming the first American-born bishop to hold the office of Primate of the Orthodox Church in America.

European Churches

In 1951, the Orthodox Church in **Czechoslovakia** became autocephalous, while in 1967, the communist government of **Albania** declared the Orthodox Church there to be non-existent.

The **Russian Exarchate of Western Europe**, which was under the jurisdiction of Constantinople since the time

of Metropolitan Eulogius, was “returned” by the ecumenical patriarchate to the Moscow Patriarchate in 1965. The exarchate refused to go under Moscow and declared itself independent and self-governing. In 1971, however, it appealed once more to Constantinople and was again received under its jurisdiction. The primate of the exarchate is **Archbishop George of Brussels**.

The **Moscow Patriarchate** continues to operate its exarchate in Western Europe with **Metropolitan Anthony Bloom** in London and **Archbishop Basil Krivosheine** in Brussels as its most famous leaders.

In 1973, the Patriarchate of Alexandria consecrated four bishops for the **Orthodox Church in Eastern Africa**, among whom are two of its original leaders, **Reuben Spartas** and **Theodore Nankyamas**.

Ukrainians and Synod

Negotiations between the **Ukrainian** “self-consecrated” and the Patriarchate of Constantinople developed in the seventies, but without clear and conclusive results.

The Russian Synod in Exile, now centered in America with its main monastery in **Jordanville, New York**, continues outside canonical relations with the other Orthodox churches. The group’s anti-ecumenical and anti-communist views are propagated under the guise of uncompromising orthodoxy.

Ecumenical Movement

In 1961, in New Delhi, the churches of Russia, Roumania, Bulgaria, and Poland joined the World Council of Churches at its third assembly. The Russian Church in the sixties was extremely active ecumenically, led by the late **Metropolitan Nikodim**. This activity has been greatly curtailed in the seventies, most likely due to the changing political needs of the Soviet

government which continues to dominate official church policy.

Within the ecumenical movement the Orthodox, as a whole, continue to stress the priority of faith and order in the ecumenical dialogue, and to insist on perfect unity in the Orthodox faith as the sole condition for Christian unity and sacramental communion. The bishops of the Orthodox Church in America issued an official **encyclical** on this issue in 1973.

Roman Church

In 1959, **Pope John XXIII** announced the convocation of an “ecumenical council” of the Roman Catholic Church. This council, called **Vatican II**, opened in 1962 and closed in 1965. Pope John died in 1963 and was succeeded by **Pope Paul VI**. Attended by all Roman bishops and many non-Catholic observers, the council published official documents concerning all aspects of Roman Catholic church life. The council caused great changes in the Roman Church and the post-conciliar period has been one of confusion and conflict. The most significant changes of this time have been the radical questioning of the Roman system of ecclesiastical authority and the enthusiastic entrance of Roman Catholics into ecumenical activity. The recent changes in the Roman Church have had a tremendous impact on the entire Christian world.

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